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ĀTMAN

IN PRE-UPANIṢADIC VEDIC LITERATURE

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BY

H. G. NARAHARI, M.A., M.LITT.,

Research Fellow, Department of Sanskrit,
University of Madras

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इदं नम ऋषिभ्यः पूर्वजेभ्यः पूर्वेभ्यः पथिकृद्भ्यः ॥

—RV. X. 14.15

"Obeisance unto the seers of old, the ancient makers of the Path."

FOREWORD

IT gives me very great joy to write a foreword to this book of Mr. H. G. Narahari who was formerly my student in the Sanskrit Department of the University of Madras. He worked under my supervision for two years from October 1939, and prepared this Thesis for which the University awarded him the Degree of Master of Letters. The Thesis is now being published in the form of a book. It must be a matter of pride, even to senior scholars of standing, to have their books published in the Adyar Library Series in which many important works have already appeared. My first duty is to congratulate Mr. Narahari in being able to have his first publication included in this well-known Series.

I began to study the Vedic literature about twenty-five years ago. I worked mainly on the Vedic commentaries and I was able to discover, identify (settling the dates and other details) and publish many of them which were unknown till a few years ago. There was one central idea which always appealed to me and that is that, in studying the ancient literature of India, we must not overlook the Indian tradition. It was the belief among the European scholars in the last century that there was no real Vedic interpretation in India in ancient times and that Sāyaṇa simply wrote out a

commentary on the Vedas by depending on his imagination and his erudition, without the aid of any systematic literature on the subject, handed down to him by tradition. The discovery of many earlier commentaries on the Vedas in recent times has disproved this position. Thus it can now be asserted that there was a continuous tradition of interpreting the text of the Vedas in ancient India.

In the matter of interpreting the thoughts contained in the Vedic texts also, there was a continuous tradition in India. Here too we can reach the right goal only by taking into consideration the literature that is available in Sanskrit on this subject. Indian tradition records the existence of a high state of civilization on the Indian soil in some very ancient times; from that time onwards there was a decline in civilization. The standards of those ancient times were accepted as the ideal throughout the ages in India, in all aspects of civilized life. The actual literary records of that ancient civilization are not very voluminous, and are contained in what is now called the Vedas. Apart from the actual literature, there was also a tradition handed down from generation to generation. Times changed; customs and manners changed; ideals changed. Yet there was an unbroken continuity of civilized life with its root in those Vedic times. The civilization of that early period made such a great impression on the nation that, throughout its history, it was impossible for the leaders of thought to suspect that there could be anything wrong in what has been

inherited from that period. This attitude continued to dominate the mind of the Indians till a short time ago when a new outlook took possession of the thoughts of the Indians.

That the world started from a state of uniformity and progressed through a process of differentiation is a doctrine known and accepted by the thinkers of old in India. Further differentiation and complexity are the marks of what is called the evolution of the Universe. But the theory of evolution developed by the scientists of the last century in Europe accepted only a single line of such an evolution, and gave no room for the reverse process of involution. Nor did it include the possibility of different lines of evolution started at different periods in the history of the Universe. As a matter of fact, such a line of thought could not have found a place in the scientific theories of the last century in so far as certain antecedent beliefs of the European nations necessarily coloured their scientific advancement, though science developed in opposition to the beliefs of former times. According to Biblical calculations, the world had its origin only about five milleniums ago. Even the science of Geology, on which most of the theories about the age of the earth were based, did not calculate the age of human life on the earth as very much farther back in history than what religion had taught the nation for many centuries. The scientists of the nineteenth century could not think of man having passed through high stages of civilization, in so far as man's history is so very short. Thus the

necessary conclusion was that whatever records of man's past history are available must be interpreted as man's first efforts to find his way in this world to which he was quite new. It was Max Müller who gave shape to these various theories regarding the history of the Aryan race and the achievements of the Aryans in pre-historic times and in the early periods of history. The Aryans entered India only about four thousand years ago, and the Vedas record man's experiences and aspirations in those early periods of his history on this earth. Man's thoughts started with religion and with ritualism, and slowly began to rise to the levels of philosophy. Max Müller established the doctrine of the Vedic Saṁhitās being texts on religion and ritualism with some occasional flashes of philosophy, and marked the stages of philosophical growth out of theology and religion as polytheism, henotheism, monotheism and monism. The last stage was reached only in the Upaniṣadic period. He enunciated the doctrine of a complete antithesis between the theology, religion and ritualism of the Vedic Saṁhitās on one side, and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads on the other side. Although there have been slight readjustments here and there, no exponent of Indian philosophy has appreciably deviated from this path which Max Müller had marked out. The only real development from this theory was in postulating that theology and ritualism were the contribution of the Brahmins, while philosophy was the contribution of the Kṣatriyas. Richard Garbe was the exponent of this theory.

The spirit of Indian tradition had been to consider the whole of the Vedic literature as a single, harmonious unit. The post-Vedic development of Indian civilization, according to Indian tradition, was a continuous extension of this Vedic civilization. The Purāṇas, the Dars'anas and all the S'āstras were only true interpretations of the Vedic thoughts in newer ways to make these thoughts understandable to the later generations. As such, Indian tradition asserted that not only there was harmony within the Vedic texts, there was also the same harmony between the Vedic texts and the post-Vedic S'āstras which attempted an interpretation of the Vedic texts.

It is well known that in the post-Vedic civilization, as represented by the Purāṇas, there was no conflict between theology and philosophy, between religion and rationalism. It is not possible to distinguish here between the various strata of religious or philosophical thoughts, like polytheism, monotheism and monism. The Purāṇas presuppose and accept the existence of all such currents of thought. Why should we assume that conditions were quite different in Vedic times? In post-Vedic times there is no such line of evolution as polytheism, monotheism and monism that can be drawn up on the map of history. Religion and ritualism on one side, and rationalism and philosophy on the other side, existed together and represented different aspects of a single, unitary civilization.

The texts of Rāmānujācārya's writings are decidedly later than the texts of S'aṅkarācārya's writings.

But it cannot be said that the thoughts contained in the writings of Rāmānuja are also later than the thoughts contained in the writings of S'aṅkara. S'aṅkarācārya refutes in his writings the very doctrines which Rāmānujācārya re-asserted at a later time. Similarly, the texts of the Upaniṣads may be later than the texts of the Vedic Saṁhitās. From this it does not follow that the thoughts contained in the Upaniṣadic texts are also later than the thoughts contained in the Vedic Saṁhitās. The Ṛgvedic texts are mainly songs of inspired poets who could have a vision of some of the mysteries of the Universe. The Upaniṣadic texts represent in the main the record of the discussion of the sages about the same mystery of the Universe. It is certainly a fruitful attempt to take the Vedic Saṁhitās, expecially the Saṁhitā of the Ṛgveda, as a text-group and also the Upaniṣads as another text-group, and then to see how far the discussions recorded in the Upaniṣads have a bearing on the thoughts contained in the Saṁhitā texts.

This is what has been attempted in the present work by Mr. Narahari. His efforts have been mainly in the direction of collecting facts to show that, in essence, there is no conflict or antithesis between the thoughts of the Ṛgvedic text and the thoughts of the Upaniṣadic text. In a book on "Ātman in pre-Upaniṣadic Vedic literature," one has a right to expect an attempt at tracing the growth of the idea of the "Ātman" within the pre-Upaniṣadic Vedic literature, namely, the Ṛgveda. But the real scope of the

title is fixed by the content of the work bearing that title. The whole investigation is based on the position that the very idea of an evolution of philosophical ideas within the Ṛgvedic literature is to be questioned. Does the Ṛgveda represent various strata in the evolution of the religious or philosophical idea? Or, does it represent the final stage in such an evolution, the actual evolution being in the pre-Ṛgvedic period? The position that the stages of the growth of the idea of an "Ātman" must be traced within the Ṛgveda itself presupposes that certain elementary notions about the Ātman existed or began to enter man's mind within the Ṛgvedic period, and that such ideas took definite shape during the Upaniṣadic period. The position that I took, when I advised the author to make this investigation, is that the Ṛgveda represents a very advanced stage in civilization and that, in the Upaniṣadic period, the attempt had been to correctly grasp the thoughts of the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣis. The wonders of man when he was first introduced into this mysterious Universe, his awe at certain terrible phenomena of Nature like the storm and the darkness of night, his first notions of the possibilities of some imponderable force controlling the working of this Universe, his efforts to appease and to propitiate such a force to escape from the terrors of Nature and even to earn some benefits instead, his first thoughts on the mysteries of birth and death, his theories about some finer aspect of life coming into the body from trees and other things in Nature at the time of birth and going back to them at the time of death, his further

ponderings over the possibilities of a world beyond to which this finer element in life might traverse after leaving the gross body at the time of death—these and other stages in the first beginnings of philosophy through religion and theology, if such stages existed, must have been long past when the Ṛgvedic age dawned. The question how far the Aryans, who came into India, could have borrowed some of their ideas about the mysteries of man, his relation to a God and to the Universe, from the aboriginal tribes that peopled the land, or from other nations outside India like the Assyrians, is also not attempted in this book by the author, and I take the fullest responsibility for such omissions. I gave the direction to the author in investigating the problem on the assumption that all such questions should remain under suspense until the very foundation on which such questions have been raised are further investigated and established with sufficient strength. Was there an ethnic unit called the Aryans ? Did the Aryans come into India from outside ? Did they conquer and even exterminate an aboriginal tribe that had previously settled down in India ? Does the Ṛgveda represent an age when such events were happening ? It is more the analogy of the European colonization of other continents in recent times, than any scientific data, that lies at the root of all such theories of an Aryan invasion of India and extermination or at least subjugation of an aboriginal tribe that inhabited the country.

So far as I am concerned, the Ṛgvedic literature pre-supposes a long period of development of

civilization in India and represents the final stage in such an evolution. To determine the stages of such evolution of philosophical ideas about "Ātman" during periods far back in history prior to the Ṛgvedic period, there is no data in the Ṛgveda itself. Thus, it is not a legitimate part of a student investigating the problem of "Ātman" in the Ṛgveda to consider the question of the origin of the notion of "Ātman," unless he also investigates the pre-Ṛgvedic phases of the conception. From the Upaniṣads also, one does not get an impression that the Upaniṣadic Ṛṣis were concerned with a philosophy of a primitive nature when they were dealing with the philosophical problems in the Ṛgveda. On the other hand, the impression one gets is that they regarded the Ṛgvedic literature as representing a very advanced stage in philosophical development. They could not have accepted the Ṛgvedic texts simply to placate the orthodox. The attempts of the Ṛsis of the Upaniṣadic period were not to please the orthodox people. For the acceptance of their views, they depended more upon the strength of their argument than on accord with approved views. The whole atmosphere of the Upaniṣads is that the Ṛṣis, participating in the debates recorded in the Upaniṣads, looked upon the Ṛgveda as a literature of a very high order. In the face of this, we have no right to say that the Ṛgveda represents a primitive stage in philosophical evolution, and that philosophy really started only with the Upaniṣads. The essence of right criticism is to understand a text by data supplied by

the text itself, but not to import extraneous notions into it.

The same attitude is the right one in examining the philosophy of S'aṅkarācārya. One must understand the limitations of rationalism when one asserts that S'aṅkara's philosophy is absolutely rationalistic. If the statement suggests that Vedic authority has not any essential place in S'aṅkara's system, that would be to ignore the fundamental point of view of S'aṅkara. He definitely says that his system is based on both reason and revelation.

There are two stages in S'aṅkara's position. One is *dvaitamithyātva*, and the other is *advaita*. We experience the world of differences. A "difference" does not satisfy the tests of absolute reality, when examined in the light of pure reason. Thus, when "difference" is *mithyā*, there is nothing on which we can base the assumption of a reality as a substrate for the difference. The only conclusion possible is that there is only a void or a chain of momentary experiences. In this way, reason leads man only to the doctrine of the world being *mithyā*, and this position is what the Buddhists have accepted. For the assumption that, as a substrate on which this difference is built up, there is a positive reality, the only basis is the statement in the Vedas. Reason does not lead us to such a positive back-ground for differences. In considering the meaning of the word *atha* in the first aphorism of the Vedānta, S'aṅkara definitely says that the study of the Vedas is a necessary preliminary for

inquiry into *Brahman*. To a man who has not studied the Vedas, the idea of an absolute, positive reality behind the differences in the universe is an impossibility. It is the Vedic statement of a positive reality that leads one to an inquiry into *Brahman*. Although unaided reason cannot think of such an absolute reality, still the Vedic statement does not militate against reason. This much alone is the function of reason in philosophical inquiry. The Veda has a definite place in S'aṅkara's philosophy. Thus, both in the Upaniṣads and in S'aṅkara's philosophy, one finds the same reverence to Ṛgvedic thoughts. Why should we say that neither the Ṛṣis of the Upaniṣadic period nor S'aṅkara really cared for the Ṛgveda as a great philosophical text? For the omission of an inquiry into the evolution of the idea of "Ātman" in the Ṛgveda in working up the subject as presented in this book, I am really responsible. The author has worked up the subject within the frame work I had suggested. Of the two lines of thought, namely, the tradition of the interpretation of the texts of the Vedas in India, and the tradition of the Vedas having been regarded as recording a high state of civilization, I have been able to work up the former myself through my publications of the several Vedic commentaries. For the other point the author has made a very definite contribution through this book.

The Ṛgveda is not a philosophical work. Questions regarding the nature of Ātman, the whence, how and whither of the Ātman, the question of a Supreme Self, the relation of the external world, the Ātmans and

Īs'vara mutually, these problems are not definitely dealt with in the text of the Ṛgveda. But do the texts of the Ṛgveda presuppose a back-ground of thought where these problems were considered? Do the texts of the Ṛgveda give us any clue regarding the nature of the problems considered by the thinkers of the age and the solutions which they could have suggested at that time? This really is the subject-matter of the present work. The general impression is that the philosophy found in the Upaniṣads must have been current even at the time when the Ṛgvedic poetry was composed.

A permanent factor in man's life which can be designated the Ātman, its continuity when the body perishes at the time of death, its experiences after death, some essential unity among these Ātmans through some Supreme Being, the existence of some beings who are not conditioned by the limitations of a body and of worldly existence, their guidance in the life of pious men, these aspects of philosophy are quite plain in the texts of the Ṛgveda. But there is considerable difficulty on one point, namely, the problem of Transmigration. There is no definite statement or hint about the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣis being aware of such a phenomenon in man's life in the whole field of the Ṛgvedic texts. The first definite statement about the theory of Transmigration we come across in the Upaniṣads. And the Upaniṣads are decidedly much later in point of time than the texts of the Ṛgveda. But I have always asserted that what we find in the Upaniṣads is an attempt at understanding the philosophy of the Ṛgvedic

period, and not an attempt at evolving a new philosophy. Even now, more than a millenium after the time of S'aṅkarācārya, thinkers are trying to understand and interpret the philosophy of S'aṅkarācārya. Why? Because his thoughts have made such a great impression on the thoughts of man. Similarly the thoughts of the Ṛṣis of the Ṛgvedic period made a great impression on the people of the time and even in subsequent ages, and these seers continued to be regarded as men with supernatural vision. Yāska speaks of them as *sākṣātkṛtadharmāṇaḥ*. There are many stories of a person being recognised as a Ṛṣi only when he could see a Devatā. Certainly the tradition of such Ṛṣis must have continued to impress the thoughts of the people of a later age, and, even in the Upaniṣadic period, we find thinkers engaging themselves in understanding and interpreting the thoughts of the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣis, just as thinkers of the modern age try to understand and interpret S'aṅkarācārya.

Looked at from this point of view, the position is that what is found enunciated in the Upaniṣads is only what existed in the philosophy of the Ṛgvedic period. The philosophical doctrines found definitely reflected in Ṛgvedic poetry only support the view that, even in Ṛgvedic times, people knew of the phenomenon of Transmigration in man's life. It is this aspect of the relation between the thoughts of the Ṛgveda and the texts of the Upaniṣads that is attempted by the author in this book. It is true that, to those students of Indian philosophy whose mental outlook is fashioned

by the doctrine of evolution and who can think of only an evolution of philosophy from Ṛgvedic theology, through the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, to the real philosophy of S'aṅkarāçārya, this book would seem to be a revolt against accepted views. But Max Müller did not adopt the Indian tradition ; and why should a modern student deny to himself the right of not accepting the views propounded by Max Müller on the basis of the theory of evolution, on the biblical notion of the world being only about five thousand years old, on the theory of an Aryan migration into India about four thousand years ago, and on the geological calculation of the world and man's life in it being only a few thousand years old ?

The attempt in this book is to adduce arguments to prove the authenticity of Indian tradition. It is neither narrow-minded orthodoxy nor crude nationalism that has prompted me to guide the author in these lines of investigation. Texts must be studied from within themselves; they should not be made to subject themselves to extraneous theories. A right to question is inherent in every student. These were the guiding principles on which the investigation of the problem has been undertaken. This is the justification for the absence of the orthodox view of an evolution of the philosophical tenets from the Ṛgveda to the Upaniṣads and within the Ṛgveda itself. Whether there is such an evolution is a question that will be considered in connection with the investigation of another problem, namely, the doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation

in Hinduism. In this connection the question will be considered whether the doctrine is purely Indian in origin or whether there has been borrowing from another nation, and also whether the doctrine arose in Hindu thought only at a later stage in the development of their religion or whether even the earliest phases of their religion, recorded in the Saṁhitās of the Vedas, include that doctrine.

The author has spared no pains to make his investigation very thorough. He has been able to present an all-round picture of the nature of the Ātman as could be studied from the Vedic Saṁhitās. During his research work, I found that he had a capacity to collect and examine details, a power to take a comprehensive view of facts, a full grasp of the fundamentals of the problem, and a commendable spirit of critical attitude and independence of judgment. The whole work is entirely his. I have only guided him with my own suggestions and opinions. It is true that he has consulted me at every stage of the investigation, and that I have read through the entire book before it was brought together into its present form. But this does not take away even a mite of his right to call the work his own independent production. He has understood every point, and is satisfied with everything that is presented in the book. I take full responsibility for the general plan of the book and for the main basic ideas underlying the investigation. This does not mean that I have imposed my views on him. It only means that everything that is mentioned in this book has my full approval.

As mentioned in the Preface by the author himself, a considerable portion of the book appeared as articles in well-known Journals. At the final stage, they were revised and incorporated into this book. The author had the advantage of receiving opinions from many scholars about the articles which form the major portion of the work. I am glad to note that the opinions were uniformly favourable. The work is only the starting point for a new line of investigation, for a new approach to the problem of Indian philosophy.

I am very happy to note that, at the time this book is being published, the author has been awarded a Fellowship in the Madras University. Such an award is a great honour to a young research worker, and a full recognition by the University of the valuable work he has done already. It is also a great encouragement for his future work. I consider it a privilege that he has prepared the book as a student, working under my guidance, and that he is releasing the book when he is working again under my guidance as a Research Fellow of the Madras University. I take this opportunity to congratulate the author on his exquisite work, and I wish him success in his future endeavours.

University of Madras C. KUNHAN RAJA
15th September 1944 *Head of the Department of Sanskrit*

PREFATORY NOTE

THE Thesis for which the University of Madras awarded me the Degree of Master of Letters (M.Litt.) in 1943 is now published in the form of a book, after obtaining the necessary permission from the University. No substantial changes have been effected in the course of printing, and the Thesis retains the original form in which it was presented, including the Preface. The title of the Thesis was *Soul in Pre-Upaniṣadic Vedic Literature.* The word "Soul" in this title is now replaced in the present book by the word "Ātman," and the University has given me the required sanction to make this alteration. In the Thesis, Sanskrit passages were given in Roman transliteration. In the present book, however, Devanagari characters have been used, except in the case of individual words or of very short passages. It is no easy task to reproduce in print Avestan and accentuated Vedic words when transliterated in Roman. On account of war conditions, it was also impossible for the Press to secure special types. I am therefore constrained to make efforts to represent those words in as approximate a manner as I can. Still, I am sure that it will not be difficult to identify the words.

I have to thank the University of Madras for having given me the necessary permission for the publication of the Thesis. I fully realize the difficulties at present in undertaking the publication of a book, having regard to the scarcity of paper and the high cost of printing. My special thanks are therefore due to the Director of the Adyar Library for his kindness in having undertaken the publication of the Thesis in the Adyar Library Series. I have also to thank the editors of the different Oriental Journals who have permitted me the use of what first appeared as papers in their periodicals. The Vasanta Press deserves my thanks for the very good printing of the book even in these difficult times. The book is of a very technical nature, requiring elaborate use of diacritical marks for the types and containing words and passages in other languages. In spite of this handicap and of the heavy work undertaken already, it has been possible for the Press to complete the printing of this book in a very short time. At the same time, the Press has been able to keep up its usual standards as regards the quality of printing.

I have been working in the Adyar Library as Research Assistant now for five years, and the facilities which the Library provided me have been great factors in my studies. Now, at the time I am publishing my Thesis in the form of a book, I have been awarded a Research Fellowship by the University of Madras, and I shall not be on the Research staff of the Library. Yet, I have been permitted to continue my studies in the Library during the period of my Fellowship. There

is thus no break in my association with the Library. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude once more to the Director of the Adyar Library for all the amenities which the Library has provided me for my studies.

It is a matter of deep gratification for me that the first book I was able to publish could be included in such a well-known Series as that of the Adyar Library. I once more thank all those concerned in enabling me to bring out my Thesis in the form of a book.

Adyar Library, H. G. NARAHARI

7-9-1944

PREFACE *

EVER since I began the study of the Vedas in my B.A. Hons. course in the Mysore University, there has been in me the desire to trace the back-ground of the thought contained in the Upaniṣads. When later I took up the Vedas as my special subject for the M.A. Degree Examination of the same University, this desire of mine was only enhanced. It was not till October 1939 when I became a Research Student in the Sanskrit Department of the Madras University under the direction of Prof. C. Kunhan Raja, M.A., D. Phil. (Oxon.), Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the University, that I could put into actual practice what remained till then a mere ambition of mine. The present Thesis embodies in the main the result of my investigations from this date till the end of October 1941. An attempt is made in these pages to collect and examine the Ṛgvedic ideas regarding the nature of the individual Soul, its relation to God, and its destination after the destruction of the body.

Neither Indian tradition nor the opinion of modern scholars seems to be in favour of regarding the Saṁhitās as philosophical texts. The different systems of Indian Philosophy like the Vedānta seek their origin in the Upaniṣads rather than in the texts belonging to the earlier age. As regards modern scholars, the tendency with the majority of

* This is the Preface to the Thesis as it was submitted for the Degree.

them is to believe that real philosophy is unknown in India till the time of the Upaniṣads, and that the earlier age of the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas was one when the minds of people were attracted by religious piety rather than philosophic reflection. Times have now changed, and it is being increasingly felt that, even if the Saṁhitās are not philosophic treatises, there is nothing to prevent their containing philosophic material, that Upaniṣadic thought sprang up neither all of a sudden nor among a people different from those responsible for the Vedic hymns, but is only a continuation of the unbroken tradition handed down for generations from the time of the Saṁhitās (or even earlier) down to that of the Upaniṣads. Yet the work that has been done in this field so far is scanty enough. Historians of the Philosophy of Ancient India allot but a few negligible paragraphs for the philosophic tendencies in the period of the hymns, and that too with a sort of reluctance, actuated more by the desire to be historical rather than philosophical in their outlook. More valuable in this connection are the contributions of Charpentier, Oertel and Edgerton. Had Charpentier lived to complete his excellent monograph, *Brahman*, had Oertel entered into a more detailed investigation, or had Professor Edgerton carried out the scheme sponsored by him in 1916 in the pages of the Journal of the American Oriental Society, I should perhaps have been considerably anticipated in several of my deductions. As it is, Charpentier's German Monograph stops with the etymology of *Brahman*, and before he could enter on his more ambitious programme in the third part of his work, Fate called him away from this world. In a valuable article entitled "The Back-ground of the Pantheistic Monism of the Upaniṣads" contributed to the ***Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry***, Oertel attempts "to analyse and

group together all those currents of speculative thought which may be regarded as the fore-runners of that pantheistic monism which the Chāndogya Upaniṣad sums up in the formula *tat tvam asi* and which still later finds its philosophical elaboration in the scholastics of the Vedānta." He enters into a fairly exhaustive discussion of the monistic tendencies in the Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas, but does not aim also at tracing the back-ground of the numerous philosophic conceptions of the Upaniṣadic period. The importance of this has, however, been realized by Professor Edgerton as is evident from his attempt at the preparation of a card-index of the philosophic ideas and expressions in the Vedic Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and older Upaniṣads, an examination of which should show the close dependence of the Upaniṣads on the older Vedic philosophy. Only the scheme of this index is as yet available.

The ambition of the present Thesis is humbler than that of Professor Edgerton's proposed scheme, and its scope narrower. All that is attempted here is only to show that almost all the ideas that go to make the thought of the Upaniṣads have a definite back-ground in the Saṁhitās, especially in the Ṛgveda. In Chapter I, an attempt is made to show that the Ṛgvedic seers definitely knew of the existence of the Individual Soul (*Ātman*) which, being the indestructible part of the individual, survives corporal destruction. In Chapter II, the relation of this Soul (*Ātman*) with *Brahman*, the Supreme Soul, is considered. The three succeeding Chapters concern themselves with the destiny after death of the virtuous Soul; Chapter III thus examines the Vedic conception of Immortality; in Chapter IV it is shown that the Vedic seers believed in a three-fold Heaven to which the virtuous Souls went in accordance with the degree of their merit; and Chapter V endeavours to show how much knowledge of the *Devayāna*

and *Pitṛyāṇa* the Ṛgvedic seers already had, and how this knowledge compares with the account given of these two paths in the Upaniṣads. The next three Chapters are devoted to the relation between God and man in the Ṛgvedic period; thus Chapter VI treats of the salient features of the religion of the Ṛgveda and the different ways by which these seers approached their gods, through fear, love, need or friendship; Chapter VII attempts to classify the Vedic gods into those that receive offerings (*havirbhājaḥ*) and those that receive praise (*sūktabhājaḥ*). Chapter VIII is devoted to examine the several kinds of rewards which the Ṛgvedic seers sought to obtain from their gods by propitiating them. In Chapter IX, it is the endeavour to prove that Upaniṣadic thought has its source only in the literature of the earlier period, that it is wrong to attribute absolute Kṣatriya authorship to it, and that it is only a continuation of earlier speculations to which both Brahmins and Kṣatriyas have contributed. Even in the Saṁhitā, it is difficult to say whose interest predominates, whether it is of the Brahmin or of the Kṣatriya. Most of the authors are evidently Brahmins. Viśvāmitra, one of the most important among the Ṛṣis, was originally a Kṣatriya, though he later became a Brahmin. There are also many other Kṣatriya authors. Many passages in the Ṛgveda are devoted to the praise of the piety and benevolence of Kṣatriyas, and these are composed by Brahmin authors. We cannot also ignore the fact that it is after all the Brahmins who have preserved the texts, and that too as an integral part of the entire Vedic lore. There is thus found only a harmony existing between Brahmins and Kṣatriyas in the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā; and it is nothing but this same relation that we can find in the Upaniṣads also. In Chapter X attempt is made to show that, though the theory of Transmigration is found in

its full-fledged form only in the Upaniṣads, yet it is impossible to deny that its traces are clearly found even in the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā. The Vedic ideas regarding Sin and its penalty form the subject of Chapter XI. Chapter XII is the conclusion, where it is pointed out that, though we may not be justified in calling the Saṁhitās philosophic treatises, there is nothing to prevent them from containing philosophic material which should be the record of the philosophic ideas current during the age. These philosophic data are the clear precursors of all those ideas which go to make the thought of the Upaniṣads. There may be considerable difference in standard between the philosophy of the Upaniṣads and that prevailing in the earlier age; but still the difference is one of degree not of kind.

There is another point which brings to light the intimate relation that Upaniṣadic thought has with the thought contained in the Saṁhitās. I have not introduced this point into the main body of the Thesis; but it is something which I consider worth notice. The nature of *Brahman* is enunciated in the later Vedānta works as constituting *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, and these works embody only the thought of the Upaniṣads. We can thus say that the Upaniṣadic *Brahman* is *sat-cit-ānanda*. One can very well understand the presence of the first two constituents, *sat* and *cit*, as the subject and the object. When these two cover the entire Universe, there must be some special reason for introducing the third factor, *ānanda* as a constituent of *Brahman*. It has been amply recognised that the most prominent element in the religion of the Ṛgveda is man's happiness both in this world and in the other, earned, through the grace of the gods, by leading a moral life. It should not thus be wrong to say that *ānanda* is the ultimate human goal according to the Ṛgvedic

religion. It is worthy of note in this context that the word *ānanda* itself occurs *twice* in the Ṛgveda (IX. 113. 6, 11) in connection with the description of the happy world above coveted by the virtuous people. It is my belief that the presence of this element in the Upaniṣadic doctrine of *Brahman* must be a survival of the Ṛgvedic goal. This and similar affinities in thought between the Upaniṣads and the Saṁhitās deserve closer study. Here I simply introduce the point.

The entire Thesis, excepting Chapter VI and Chapter XII which is the conclusion, has already been published in the form of independent papers in the different Oriental Journals of standing in India. Thus Chapter I appears in the *Review of Philosophy and Religion*, Allahabad (Vol. XI, pp. 51 ff.) under the caption "Soul in the Ṛgveda." Chapter II appears under the title "The Meaning of Brahman and Ātman in the Ṛgveda" in the *Indian Culture*, Calcutta (Vol. VIII, Parts 2 and 3). Chapters III and VII appear in the *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, Bombay, under the captions "Apropos of the Conception of Immortality in the Veda" (Vol. IV, pp. 18 ff.) and "Sūkta-bhājaḥ and Havirbhājaḥ" (Vol. III, pp. 131 ff.). Chapter IV appears under the same title in the *Silver Jubilee* number of the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona; and Chapter V appears under the same caption in Vol. XXIV, pp. 45 ff. of the *same* Journal. Chapter VIII will appear with the same title in the *Radhakumud Mookerji Commemoration Volume* which is being prepared by the U. P. Historical Society, Lucknow. Chapters IX and X have appeared in the *Poona Orientalist* under the titles "On the Origin of Upaniṣadic Thought" (Vol. VI, pp. 139 ff.) and "On the Origin of the Doctrine of Saṁsāra" (Vol. IV, pp. 159 ff.) respectively. A portion of chapter XI appears under the caption "Designation of Hell in the Ṛgveda and

the Meaning of the word Asat" in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta (Vol. XVIII, pp. 158 ff.). But, before these published papers were included as chapters of this Thesis, care has been taken to revise them thoroughly and to recast them wherever it was found necessary. As a result, some of these papers appear in the Thesis in an entirely new form.

The Bibliography which is divided threefold into Sanskrit Texts, Works in Modern Languages, and Reference Books, Journals etc., gives the books and MSS. used by me in the preparation of this Thesis.

There only remains for me the very pleasant task of expressing my indebtedness to my revered Professor, Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, under whose invaluable guidance this entire Thesis has been prepared. Ever since I came to know him, he has been a never failing source of inspiration to me in my studies. To him I owe what little knowledge I possess in the methods of modern scientific research. A busy scholar, always deeply immersed in his own investigations, he has never once found himself too busy to attend to me and solve my numerous difficulties. In this connection I must specially mention the many reference-books in German which no serious student of the Veda can afford to ignore and which, without his helpful explanations, would have remained inaccessible to me. In the actual preparation of the Thesis many a faltering step of mine has he steadied, many a false one corrected, and, but for the beacon-light of his experienced and benevolent guidance, I should really have lost my way in the deep and wide Ocean of Vedic Learning. If to-day I can claim to have landed safely, having brought my Thesis to its present successful conclusion, it is entirely due to the kind and sound guidance I have had at his hands. I cannot find

adequate words to express the fullness of gratitude I feel towards him for all the kindness he has shown me. If I stop now, it is not because I have exhausted all that I have to say, but because I feel dumb for want of words. I should perhaps conclude with the poet :

महिमानं यदुत्कीर्त्य (मम) संह्रियते वचः ।
श्रमेण तदशक्त्या वा न गुणानामियत्तया ॥

H. G. NARAHARI

Madras,
14th August 1943.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AG. Ph.	Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie von Paul Deussen.
Bezz. Beitr.	Beiträge zur Kunde der Indogermanischen Sprachen, herausgegeben von A. Bezzenberger.
Bṛ. Up.	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.
B. Z. I. K.	Beiträge zur Indische Kulturgeschichte von R. Garbe.
Ch. Up.	Chāndogya Upaniṣad.
ERE.	Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.
Et. Forsch.	Etymologische Forschungen.
GN.	Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesselschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.
HIL.	History of Indian Literature by A. Weber.
Indogerm. Gramm.	Indogermanische Grammatik.
Ind. Bibl.	Indische Bibliographie.
I. St.	Indische Studien.
J. A. O. S.	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J. B. B. R. A. S.	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
J. O. R. M.	Journal of Oriental Research, Madras.
J. R. A. S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
Kaṭh. Up.	Kaṭha Upaniṣad.
O. L. S. T.	Oriental and Linguistic Studies by W. D. Whitney.
O. S. T.	Original Sanskrit Texts (5 Vols.) by J. Muir.
Pras'. Up.	Pras'na Upaniṣad.
S. B. B. A. W.	Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie.
S. B. E.	Sacred Books of the East.
Taitt. Up.	Taittirīya Upaniṣad.
W. Z. K. M.	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Des Morgenlandes.
Z. D. M. G.	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesselschaft.

CHAPTER I

EXISTENCE OF ĀTMAN KNOWN TO THE ṚGVEDIC SEERS

VERY frequently the view has been expressed that real philosophy in India starts with the Upaniṣadic period, and that the earlier age is marked by a gross personification of the forces of Nature, by the arid wastes of charms and incantations and by meaningless ritualism and ceremonialism."[1] As a great

[1] Garbe, *Beiträge zur indischen Kulturgeschichte*, pp. 3 ff., *Hindu Monism*, pp. 68 ff; Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 17 ff.; *System of the Vedanta*, p. 18: Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 26; Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin of Religion*, pp. 346 ff.; *Theosophy* (Gifford Lectures) p. 95, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 5 ff.; Hertel, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, XLI. 188, Macdonell, *ERE.*, XII. 601 ff.; *India's Past*, p. 46; *History of Sanskrit Literature*, I. 226 ff.; Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, pp. 441 ff.; S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I 65 ff; S. Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, I. 33; R. D. Ranade, *Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, pp. 3 ff.; R. D. Ranade and S. K. Belvalkar, *History of Indian Philosophy*, II. 77 ff.; R. S. Deshmukh, *Religion in Vedic Literature*, p. 331. Jacobi seems to take the extreme view that the conception of immortality of the Soul was unknown to the early Aryans till the time of the later Upaniṣads (cited by R. D. Ranade and S. K. Belvalkar, *op. cit.*, p. 430, as in his *Licht des Ostens*, pp. 142-166; *Entwicklung der Göttesidee beider Indern)*; contrast H. Oertel who remarks: "An investigation of the literary remains antedating the Upaniṣads shows it to be the result of a slow but steady development, the final outcome of the combination and weaving together of various strands whose origin may be traced back to the Vedic hymns and subsequent early Brahmanical speculations all tending in the same direction." (*Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry*, p. 360); For a similar view, see also F. Edgerton, *J.A.O.S.*, XXXVI. 197 ff,; XLIX. 100 ff.; C. R. Lanman, *Beginnings of Hindu Pantheism*, p. 12; Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇatexte*, p. 8; E. W. Hopkins, *India Old and New*, p. 35; Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 215; Z. A. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, pp. 422 ff.; R. E. Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 5 ff.; B. M. Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, p. 7; L. D. Barnett, *Brahma Knowledge*, pp. 13 ff.; M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 41.

collection of hymns invoking the personified forces of Nature, the *Ṛgveda* is considered to represent the earliest phase in the evolution of religious consciousness, so that to pass from it to the Upaniṣads is to pass 'from prayer to philosophy, from hymnology to reflection, from henotheistic polytheism to monotheistic mysticism.' The *Atharvaveda* is likewise characterized as a store-house of spells and incantations, and when one passes from this Veda to the Upaniṣads, he passes from 'the domain of incantations to the domain of Philosophy.' The *Brāhmaṇas* represent an age so thoroughly filled up with sacrifices and ceremonies that it seems almost impossible to reconcile them with the Upaniṣads which stand for *knowledge* rather than *sacrifice.* This difference in idealogy between the Upaniṣadic age and the period anterior to it has been felt so keenly by some that they have been constrained even to imagine that the thinkers in the two periods belonged to absolutely different communities;[1] while all pre-Upaniṣadic thought is accepted to be only that of the Brahmins,[2] Upaniṣadic thought is considered to be the product of the speculation of only the Kṣatriyas and other non-Brahmanical races.[3]

In the present Chapter, an attempt is made to examine this question to a certain extent, and to estimate the range of

[1] A sort of reconciliation is attempted in this connection by some who divide the entire collection of hymns in the RV. into three groups, representing the views of three classes of men, the poet, the priest and the philosopher; the first, looking at the world, recognizes the divine nature as the source of law, moral and physical and as the principle of physical life; the second considers the world as the source of material prosperity, as itself the priest and the sacrifice; the third, who sees the world, seeks truth as an abstraction, as the one behind the many and as the ultimate, the unknowable source of being (D. J. Stephen, *Studies in Early Indian Thought*, p. 6 ff.)

[2] Even this view does not seem to be entirely unimpeachable when we take into consideration the fact that, among the seers of the Ṛgveda we have *Viśvāmitra*, *Trasadasyu*, *Māndhātṛ* and *Pratardana* who belong to the royal class.

[3] This view has been refuted fully in a later section.

knowledge the Ṛgvedic seers had regarding the nature of the human soul.

There are many words in the Ṛgveda which denote some factor in man, different from and subtler than his gross body. Many of the words have undergone semantic changes in later times. It is not possible to fix the exact meanings of these words in the Ṛgveda. Most of them directly denote such an entity; but there are some like *Suparṇa*, *Ajo bhāga*, and *Satya* which only imply it.

The following words of the Ṛgveda *viz.*, *Brahman*, *Satya*, *Ātman* and its shortened form *Tman*, *Ajo bhāga*, *Jīva*, *Prāṇa*, *Manas*, *Suparṇa* and *Asu* deserve consideration now.

The word *Brahman* is usually derived from the root *bṛh*. There is, however, difference of opinion on this matter and also on its original meaning. But no such disagreement seems to exist regarding the meaning of the word in the Ṛgveda itself. This point is dealt with in full detail in a subsequent section. It is enough to note here that the word *Brahman* occurs over two hundred times in the Ṛgveda in various case-forms like *Brahmā*, *Brahmāṇaḥ*, *Brahmāṇam*, *Brahma*, *Brahmaṇaḥ*, *Brahmaṇā*, *Brahmaṇām*, *Brahmaṇi* and *Brahmaṇe*, and as part of compounds like *Brahmakilbiṣe*, *Brahmadviṣaḥ*, *Brahmakārāḥ*, *Brahmakṛtiḥ*, *Brahmayujaḥ*, *Subrahmaṇyam*, *Abrahmatā*, *Subrahmā*, *Abrahmā*, *Kṛtabrahmā*, *Abrahmāṇaḥ*, *Ohabrahmāṇaḥ*, *Subrahmāṇam* and *Tuvibrahmāṇam*.

It is understood in various senses; in the masculine it may mean the 'brahmin singer', or 'great', or 'prayer,' or 'creator,' or 'Bṛhaspati,' or the 'Brahmā priest'; it is also used sometimes to denote any 'sacrificial priest in general', 'Aṅgirases or Maruts': in the neuter, the word means 'prayer', or 'food', or 'great act', or 'brahmin', or 'cause

of the universe,' or 'body', or 'great', or 'Rudra'. Several attempts have been made by modern scholars to derive the word etymologically, and *Brahman* then means also 'the latent electric power stirred up by such apparatus as sacred vessels, hymns, etc.,"[1] or 'fire' (internal in man and cosmic),[2] or 'speech or word."[3]

Besides, the very close association, in the RV., between *Brahman* and *Bṛhaspati* has played an important part in the evolution of the concept of *Brahman*. Even in the RV., Brahman is already the repository of great power, and this fact must, without doubt, have exerted considerable influence in the conception of Brahman.[4]

The word *Satya* occurs fifty-one times in the RV., in the nominative case, and five times in the instrumental. As part of compounds like *Satya-uktiḥ*, *Satya-karman*, *Satya-girvāhasaṁ*, *Satya-tara*, *Satya-tātā*, *Satya-dharmā*, *Satya-dhvṛtaṁ*, *Satya-madvā*, *Satya-mantrāḥ*, *Satya-manmā*, *Satyam-ugrasya*, *Satya-yajaṁ*, *Satya-yoniḥ*, *Satya-rādhaḥ*, *Satya-vācaḥ*, *Satya-s'avasaḥ*, *Satya-s'uṣmaḥ*, *Satya-s'ravasi*, *Satya-s'rutaḥ*, *Satya-satvan*, *Satya-savaṁ*, *Satyānṛte*, *Aprāmisatya*, *Anusatyaṁ*, *Asatyāḥ*, *Ṛtajātasatyāḥ*, *Vakmarājasatyāḥ*, it occurs again over fifty times. It is once understood by Sāyaṇa to mean 'Brahman, the True'. The verse (RV. X. 85. 1) in question runs:

[1] Haug, Introduction to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, p. 5 n.; cp. Schrader who feels that "the Latin *Flamen*, whose formation points with certainty to an originally neuter idea (priesthood), corresponds exactly to the Skr. *Brahma* so that for this word also there follows a similar evolution of meanings, 'incantation,' 'community of those who know incantations', 'individuals acquainted with incantations' (priests)." (ERE., II. 42).

[2] Hertel, *Das Brahman* in *Indogermanische Forschungen*, XLI (1923), pp. 185 ff.

[3] Max Müller, *Gifford Lectures* (1892), pp. 241 ff.; *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, pp. 53 ff.

[4] A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 449.

सत्येनोत्तभिता भूमिः सूर्येणोत्तभिता द्यौः ।
ऋतेनादित्यास्तिष्ठंति दिवि सोमो अधि श्रितः ॥

The word 'Satyena' in the first quarter of this verse is interpreted by Sāyaṇa thus: *Satyena brahmaṇā anantātmanā, brahmā khalu devānām madhye satyabhūtaḥ.* The word in itself does not mean anything 'subtle.'[1] But the context suggests the recognition of some 'subtle force' in the Universe. This view appears to have been accepted by the Upaniṣadic Seers also when they speak of *Brahman*, the Supreme Principle, as being composed of 'Sat.'[2]

Ātman is usually derived from the root *an*, 'to breathe'. and is thus philologically related to *Prāṇa.* The word occurs about thirty times in the RV. in its several case-forms, and as part of compounds like *Ātmadāḥ*, *Ātmanvat*, *Ātmanvatībhiḥ*, *Ātmā-iva*, *Ātmanvantam*, *S'atātmā*, and *S'atātmānam*. It is understood in many senses like 'essence', or 'body', or 'intelligent principle', or 'controller', or 'one-self', or 'breath', or 'blissful', or 'strength', or 'multiplicity', or 'offspring', or 'years'.[3]

Tman which is apparently a shortened form in the RV. of the word *Ātman*, occurs altogether seventy-eight times[4] in the RV. and is generally used partly as a reflexive pronoun and partly as an adverb.

That the Ṛgvedic seers are quite aware of the two Upaniṣadic attributes of Brahman, *Cit* and *Ānanda* follows

[1] Wilson, however, understands by this term 'the soma libations offered at sacrifices' or 'the portion of the moon of which the gods are said to partake', and Griffith equates *Satya* with *Ṛta*, the 'law and order of the Universe'. The *Nirukta* always understands the terms in the sense of 'truth'.

[2] See, for instance, *Bṛ. Up.*, II. 3. 1.

[3] For details, see *infra*.

[4] *Five* times in the Nominative Case, *once* in the Objective, *sixty-one* times in the Instrumental, *four* times in the Dative, and *twice* in the Locative.

from the following two verses; in RV. I. 164. 4, where the seer exclaims '*ko nu ātmā*,' the term *Ātmā* is understood as the 'thinking or intelligent principle' (*pañcabhūtātmaka-s'arīrasambaddhacetanaḥ*) which though connected with the gross and subtle form, is no where perceptible as a separate object; and in RV. I. 73. 2d, the seer exhorts that Agni is to be cherished for, like Soul (*Ātmā*), he is the seat of happiness (*ātmeva s'evo didhiṣāyyo' bhūt*). We have here the later Upaniṣadic idea that 'blissfulness' (*niratis'ayānanda-svarūpatva*) is the nature of *Ātman* (Soul). Similarly, the Upaniṣadic meaning of *Ātman* that it is the 'essence' of the body, that it is its 'controller' is also known, for *Ātman* in the former sense occurs at least in *eight* passages [1] of the RV., and occurs *once* (RV. VII. 87. 2.) in the latter sense (*dhārayitā*); in the latter verse, the seer, addressing Varuṇa, says *Ātmā te vātaḥ*, and Sāyaṇa interprets the line saying that *Vāta* (wind), as directed by Varuṇa, is the controller (*Ātmā*) of all beings.

Though the general usage of *Tman*, the abridgment of *Ātman*, is as a reflexive pronoun or an adverb, it is *once* interpreted by S'āyaṇa to mean 'life' or 'existence' (*Jīva*). The context is given by the following verse (RV. I. 63. 8):

त्वं त्यां न इन्द्र देव चित्रामिषमापो न पीपयः परिज्मन् ।
यया शूर प्रत्यस्मभ्यं यंसि त्मनमूर्जं न विश्वध क्षरध्यै ॥

where one of the gifts that Indra is asked to bestow on his worshippers is *Tman* which, according to Sāyaṇa, means *Jīva* (life or existence). It is possible to infer from this that *Ātman* meant, even in the RV., 'the own person, the own body, opposed to the outside world', and the 'essence as opposed to what is not essence'.

[1] For details, see the next section.

The compound *Ajo bhāgaḥ* occurs but *once* in the RV., though its first member occurs *eight* times by itself and means either ‘ unborn ’, or the ‘ goat ’ ; as part of the other compound *Aja Ekapād* which is more frequent in the RV., *Ajaḥ* always means ‘ unborn ’. The compound *Ajo bhāgaḥ* occurs in the following verse (RV. X. 16. 4) :

अजो भागस्तपसा तं तपस्व तं ते शोचिस्तपतु तं ते अर्चिः ।
यास्ते शिवास्तन्वो जातवेदस्ताभिर्वहैनं सुकृतामु लोकम् ॥

The seer is here addressing Agni who is consuming the dead body on the funeral pyre, and the most natural way of understanding the present verse would be to take that Agni is asked not to destroy completely the man’s ‘ unborn part ’ (*Ajo bhāga*), but just to kindle it so that, purified thereby, it may be in a fit state to enter into a higher existence. Griffith’s translation of the phrase *Ajo bhāgaḥ* into ‘ thy portion is the goat ’ seems to be quite unimaginative, and Sāyaṇa strikes the right note when he explains [1] the word thus : *ajaḥ janana-rahitaḥ śarīrendriyabhāgavyatiriktaḥ antarapuruṣalakṣaṇo yo bhāgo’ sti.* Moreover, it is not possible to declare that *Ajaḥ* means always the ‘ goat ’ in the RV., for the context proves that, in at least *six* [2] out of its *fourteen* occurrences, the word means something else than ‘ goat ’. In all its *four* occurrences in the *Nirukta* (XII. 29, 30, 32, and 33), Yāska interprets the word to mean ‘ unborn ’ (*ajanaḥ*). It is, therefore, clear that

[1] Sāyaṇa is here supported by Grassmann who also translates the word *Ajaḥ* as ‘ ungeboren,’ deriving it from the root ‘ jan ’ (*Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 19). Roth and Böhtlingk also agree that, in a number of passages of the RV. and in AV. X. 7. 31, the word *Aja* has the sense of ‘ unborn ’ (*St. Petersburg Lexicon*. p. 66). Muir also translates *Ajo bhāgaḥ* as the ‘ unborn part,’ and, though he later hesitates the correctness of it, is convinced that ‘ in any case, the verses prove that any being proceeding from earth to heaven has to traverse a region of darkness before he can reach his destination.’ (*Original Sanskrit Texts*, V. 303 n.).

[2] RV. I. 67. 3 ; II. 31. 6 ; III. 45. 2 ; VI. 50. 14 ; VIII. 41. 10 ; X. 16. 4.

Sāyaṇa's interpretation in this case is based on traditional authority.

This is not all. Both the AV. and the *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa* seem to support Sāyaṇa's explanation. In AV. XVIII. 2. 36, Agni is entreated to burn mildly and to spend his fury on the woods and on the earth, and in another place (IX. 5. 1), the same Veda says that, before the 'unborn part' can complete its course from earth to the third heaven, it has to traverse a vast gulf of darkness, and we may not be wrong if we should imagine that the purification sought at the hands of Agni might have been intended to make this dismal journey easier. According to the *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI. 2. 1. 1), a man has three births: first from his father and mother, the second time through sacrifice, and the third time when, after death and cremation, he once more emerges into life (*trir ha vai puruṣo jāyate, etan nu eva mātus' ca adhi pitus' ca agre jāyate, atha yaṁ yajñaḥ upanamati sa yad yajate, tad dvitīyaṁ jāyate; atha yatra mriyate yatrainam agnāv abhyādadhati sa yat tatas sambhavati tat tṛtīyam jāyate*). The S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa which speaks here of a third birth of the individual after cremation, becomes valid only if we understand the Ṛgvedic verse mentioned above to be an address to Agni who is asked to temper the 'unborn part', not to consume it, so that it gets a fresh birth. This idea is not new even to the Ṛgveda which, in another context, speaks of the individual who, at cremation, leaves behind on earth all that is evil and imperfect and proceeds, by the paths trodden by his fathers (RV. X. 14. 7), to the realms of eternal light (RV. IX. 113. 7); the AV. (XI. 1. 37) supplements this by saying that the spirit is, at this time, invested with a lustre like that of the gods. Would it be too much to understand that this lustre might

have been considered to have come to the Soul (*Ajo bhāga*) after it has been cleansed by the funeral fire ?

Moreover, when the Ṛgvedic seers speak, at death, of a heaven for the virtuous and some punishment for the wicked, it is implied that they are sure that there is some part of the individual which survives cremation, and which later enjoys or suffers, for enjoyment or suffering is impossible without an enjoyer or a sufferer. It is quite likely that this part was designated the 'unborn part' (*Ajo bhāga*) by them. We could, therefore, say that the Ṛgvedic seers were already convinced that death is not the end of man, and that it destroys only his body, but not his *real self* which is neither born nor destroyed. It is this idea that forms the real core of the the Upaniṣadic idea of the human soul.

Jīva occurs *twenty-three* times in all in the different cases and *ten* times as part of a compound. According to Sāyaṇa, the word is used *twice* (RV. I. 113. 16 ; 164. 30) to denote the 'individual soul,' *thirteen* times[1] in the sense of 'life,' *sixteen* times[2] in the sense of 'living being in general,' and *twice* (RV. X. 18. 4, 8) in the sense of 'children.' The following are the *two* passages[3] where *Jīva* is alleged to have been used in the sense of the 'individual soul' :

उदीर्ध्वं जीवो असुर्न आगादप प्रागात्तम आ ज्योतिरेति ।
आरैक्पन्थां यातवे सूर्यायागन्म यत्र प्रतिरन्त आयुः ॥
अनच्छये तुरगातु जीवमेजद्ध्रुवं मध्य आ पस्त्यानाम् ।
जीवो मृतस्य चरति स्वधाभिरमर्त्यो मर्त्येना सयोनिः ॥

[1] RV. V. 44. 5 ; 78. 9 ; 113. 8 ; X. 57. 5. etc.

[2] RV. I. 92. 9 ; IV. 51. 5 ; VII. 77. 1 ; VIII. 8. 23. etc.

[3] RV. I. 113. 16 ; I. 164. 30.

In the first verse, the seer is describing the glory of dawn when, as darkness begins to disappear gradually and streaks of light adorn the quarters, the whole of creation which, at night, had retired to rest, wakes up, inspired and enlivened by the touch of the early rays of the sun. When, therefore, the Seer says here *Jīvo asur na āgāt* he only means that the sweetness of the morning has enlivened him into activity, and *Jīva* must hence mean the 'active and animating principle' of the individual in whose body it resides. This is nothing short of the Upaniṣadic idea that Ātman is the inciter of the body into action, or to speak in the metaphorical language of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (III. 3), Ātman is the charioteer while the body is the chariot (*ātmānaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ ratham eva ca*).

The second-half of the second verse speaks of the immortal principle which continues to live by subsisting itself on the offering of manes, and *Jīva* in this line must mean the 'life-giving principle' of the human body. Explaining this verse, Griffith says[1] that the subject of the first hemistich is clearly Agni, while the Moon, sustained by sacrificial offerings to the Dead, appears to be the subject of the second. But Sāyaṇa seems to be more convincing when he attempts to show that the two hemistichs go to give one complete and connected idea; according to him, the import of the entire verse is the essencelessness of the human body and the eternality of the animating principle which resides in it (*anena dehasya asāratā jīvasya nityatvañ ca pratipādyate*); the first hemistich would then mean that this body which, when life was in it, was eager in discharging the various functions, now lies motionless since life is out; the second hemistich explains what the 'life-giving or animating principle'

[1] *Hymns of the Rigveda*, I. 224 n.

(*Jīva*) does after discarding the body and leaving it in the state described before, by stating that it continues moving about subsisting on the manes which are continually offered to the Dead. It is, therefore, clear that the Ṛgvedic seers recognized *Ātman*, not merely as the 'essence' or 'controller' of the body, but also as an eternal principle which continues to exist long after the destruction of the human body.

Prāṇa is also derived from the root *an*, 'to breathe,' and is hence related to *Ātman*. It occurs *eight* times [1] in the RV. in the different cases and always means the 'life-breath' of the individual (*prāṇavāyu*) which is necessary for the continuation of existence. The Upaniṣads are ever fond of narrating numerous legends [2] to show the pre-eminence of 'breath' (*prāṇa*) over the other senses of the body, and 'breath' happens to be one of the primary components of the Upaniṣadic *Ātman*. The word occurs *twice* (VII. 22 ; X. 8) in the *Nirukta*, and here also Yāska understands by it the 'vital breaths.' *Prāṇa* as the life-giving principle, is thus recognized by the Ṛgvedic seers. The Upaniṣadic seers under stand *Prāṇa* only in this sense when they often equate it with the individual Soul.[3]

Manas occurs over two hundred times in the RV. ; and as part of compounds like *manojaveṣu*, *manojuvā*, *manodhṛtaḥ*, *manoyujaḥ*, *manovātāḥ*, *manocit*, *sumanasyamānaḥ*, *sumanāḥ*, *nṛmanāḥ*, *vṛṣamanāh*, *s'raddhāmanāḥ*, *gūrtamanāḥ*, it occurs fifty-six times more. The general sense of the word is the 'Mind', though, now and then, it is used in other senses also. The term is thus used *five* times [4] at least to denote 'intellect'

[1] RV. 1. 66. 1 ; III. 53. 21 ; X. 59. 6 ; I. 101. 5 ; X. 121. 3 ; 90. 13 ; 189. 2 ; I. 48. 10. It also occurs but *once* as part of the compound *Apiprāṇī*.

[2] *Pras'nopaniṣad*, II. 3 to 13 ; *Bṛ. Up.*, VI. 1 ; and *Ch. Up.*, V. 1.

[3] See, for instance, *Bṛ. Up.*, II. 1.

[4] RV. X. 71. 2 ; 121. 6 ; 177. 2 ; 181. 3 ; 183. 1, 2.

(*prajña* or *buddhi*). It is possible that the Upaniṣadic seers, who speak of *Ātman* as being 'knowledge' (*Cit*) in essence, must have been inspired to do so by the attitude of the Ṛgvedic seers who often take *Manas* in the sense of *buddhi* or *prajñā*.

The word *Suparṇa* occurs in the different cases over *thirty-five* times in the RV. and is usually taken by Sāyaṇa to mean the 'rays of the Sun.'[1] He *once* (RV. IV. 43. 3), understands the word in the sense of 'one having an attractive gait,' and *once* (RV. X. 114. 3) in the sense of 'the sacrificer and his wife, or the sacrificer and the Brahmā priest.' In the following verse (RV. I. 164. 20),[2] Sāyana, following tradition,[3] interprets it as an allegorical reference to the individual soul (*Jīvātman*) and the Supreme Soul (*Paramātman*) :

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परि षस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभि चाकशीति ॥

The two birds spoken of here are the vital and the Supreme Spirit, dwelling in one body ; the vital spirit (*Jīvātman*) enjoys the fruit or rewards of actions, while the Supreme Spirit is merely a passive spectator (*atra laukikapakṣadvaya-dṛṣṭāntena jīvaparamātmānau stūyete*). There is considerable difference of opinion among modern scholars regarding the exact meaning of the word *Suparṇa*. Wilson[4] accepts some probability in Sāyaṇa's explanation. Haug[5] takes the word to mean the metres (*metra*) or the sacrificial post (*der baum*

[1] RV. I. 79. 2; X. 73. 11 etc.

[2] This verse is bodily incorporated by the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III. 1. 1) and by the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* (IV. 6).

[3] Yāska in his *Nirukta* (XIV. 29) interprets this verse in exactly the same way.

[4] *Rigveda*, II. 133-34 n.

[5] Cited by Ludwig, *Der Rigveda*, V. 453.

des yūpa), while Grassmann[1] understands by it the Sun and the Moon (*Sonne und Mond*). Ludwig[2] considers Sāyaṇa's explanation far more probable than that of Haug or Grassmann, but finds it difficult to give himself any definite meaning to this word which has to be interpreted differently in different contexts. The same is the case with Griffith.[3] To Geldner,[4] the tree mentioned in this verse is the Tree of Knowledge, and its fruit, wisdom concerning the All-Father; the two birds are the two enquirers; one of them, to which class the poet also claims to belong, is capable of attaining his goal, while the other, who is non-speculative, is not successful (*Der Baum ist das Wissen, dessen höchste Frucht die Erkenntnis des Allvaters ist. Die beiden Vögel repräsentiern die zwei Arten der Wissbegierigen mit verschiedener Fassungsgabe. Nur den einen, zu denen sich der Dichter selbst rechnet, offenbart sich diese höchste Erkenntnis* (21 cd), *während die anderen, die Nichtspekulativen, leer ausgehen*). The introduction of the word *Suparṇa* in this context among words which mean the *Ātman* rests, therefore, entirely on the authority of the traditional commentators who seem to stand all alone in understanding the word in that light. That the verse has a symbolical meaning is accepted by both these conflicting parties, but the difference between them lies only in the method of interpreting this symbolism. If the explanation of these commentators is to be accepted, we will have to admit that the Ṛgvedic seers were also aware of the fact that the individual soul reaps the benefit of its *karma*, while the Supreme Soul is under no such compulsion; but since it is possible to credit

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 1539.

[2] *Der Rigveda*, loc. cit.

[3] *Hymns of the Rigveda*, I. 223 n.

[4] *Der Rigveda*, p. 208 ff., footnotes.

these seers with some such knowledge, on the ground that that they speak of Heaven for the virtuous and something like Hell for the vicious, it is not easy to discard their view.

Asu occurs *ten* times in the Ṛgveda independently, and *eight* times as part of compounds like *asutṛpaḥ, asutṛpau, asunītiṁ* and *asunīte.* It is taken by Sāyaṇa in the senses of 'life or life-breath' (*prāṇa*), 'controller of the body' (*s'arīrasya prerayitā*), and 'subtle-body' (*sūkṣma-s'arīra*). The meanings given by Grassmann[1] to the word are *Leben* (Life), *Lebensfrische* (prime of life), *Lebenskraft* (Vital Powers or Powers of Life), *Geisterleben* (Spirit of Life). The following verses of the Ṛgveda where this word occurs deserve notice, for these prove that the Ṛgvedic seers knew that the *spirit* is distinct from the *body* :

उदीर्ध्वं जीवो असुर्न आगादप प्रागात्तम आज्योतिरेति ।
आरैक्पन्थां यातवे सूर्यायागन्म यत्र प्रतिरन्त आयुः ॥[2]

को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानमस्थन्वन्तं यदनस्था बिभर्ति ।
भूम्या असुरसृगात्मा क्व स्वित्को विद्वांसमुप गात्प्रष्टुमेतत् ॥[3]

पुनर्नो असुं पृथिवी ददातु पुनर्द्यौर्देवी पुनरन्तरिक्षम् ।
पुनर्नः सोमस्तन्वं ददातु पुनः पूषा पथ्यां३ या स्वस्तिः ॥[4]

In the first verse, the seer speaks of the return of 'life' (*asu*) at the approach of dawn, meaning thereby the revival of consciousness after sleep is over, and thus shows that he is aware that there is a spirit which exists in the individual as distinct from the body, whose existence is essential for

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 155a.
[2] RV. I. 113. 16.
[3] RV. I. 164. 4.
[4] RV. X. 59. 7.

all activity and in whose absence the body can only be dormant; in the second verse, the seer asks "who has ever seen the precise mode in which the boneless Soul, the very life-blood and informing spirit of the earth, comes to inhabit a bony tenement; and if this is not known who is it that will repair to the wise man to ask about it? When the seer speaks here of the boneless entering the bony body it is quite clear that he knows that in substance, at least, the spirit is something which is entirely different from the body; in the third, which is one of the verses used in recalling the life of Subandhu from unconsciousness or death, Earth is requested to restore the departed Soul (*asu*) while Soma is asked to return the body, thus making a clear distinction between the *body* and the *Soul.*

Besides the *ten* words noticed in the foregoing pages, there are two verses (I. 164. 46; X. 129. 2) in the RV., which are worthy of consideration in this context. They are:

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥
न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत्प्रकेतः ।
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥

These *two* verses which claim that there is but one essence, one true thing, unmistakably herald monism; it is but a step from such ideas to the *Brahman* in the Upaniṣads who is claimed to be the Pantheistic Absolute, without a second.[1]

The Ṛgvedic seers can thus be credited with the knowledge of the following[2]: (1) that there is some "Spirit" or "Self" in man; (2) that it is different from the body

[1] M. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, pp. 210 ff.

[2] cp. P. Deussen, ERE., II. 195.

and survives the destruction of it; (3) that it is eternal, neither born nor liable to destruction; (4) that it forms the 'essence' of the body and is its controller; (5) that it is the experiencer of the reward of man's actions *i.e.*, Heaven or punishment after death; (6) that it is composed of the three qualities, *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. They seem to know also the fundamentals of *Brahman*, the Upaniṣadic Absolute as distinct from the individual self. The credit of combining and consolidating all these conceptions and, to a good extent, developing them must certainly belong to the Upaniṣadic seers,[1] though, now and then, it seems possible to see,[2] even in the Upaniṣads, the survival of some early conceptions about Ātman.

[1] cf. *Paul Oltramare* (ERE., XII. 305) who says that 'theosophical thought which is to be found in germ in the hymns and in the Brāhmaṇas, obtains form and consistency in the Upaniṣads.'

[2] *Infra*.

CHAPTER II

ĀTMAN OR THE INDIVIDUAL SELF AS DISTINCT FROM BRAHMAN

IN the preceding section an attempt was made to show that the Ṛgvedic thinkers were quite aware of the existence of the Self apart from the body, distinct from it, capable of surviving it and experiencing, after its destruction, the reward of actions on earth. Here it is proposed to consider the meaning of the term *Ātman* as understood by these seers, and its relation to *Brahman*, and also to estimate how far it is preserved in the doctrines held by the Upaniṣadic seers.

Brahman and *Ātman* together form the pivot on which revolves the great wheel of Upaniṣadic thought; the former term is the less definite of the two and is generally used in the vast majority of the Upaniṣads to designate the "First Principle" of the Universe.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* contains *three* dialogues wherein this meaning of *Brahman* is clearly expressed; the first dialogue (II. 1) narrates the story of the proud brahmin *Bālāki Gārgya* who approaches King *Ajātaśatru* offering to explain to him the nature of *Brahman*. On the king consenting to it and promising a reward of a thousand cows

Gārgya begins his exposition. Twelve times[1] in succession does he endeavour to define *Brahman* as the person in the Sun (*Āditye puruṣaḥ*), in the Moon, in Lightning, in Ether, in Wind, in Fire, in Water, in the Mirror, in Space, and in the body, or as him whom here the sound follows as he departs (*ya evāyaṁ yantaṁ pas'cāc chabdo'nūdeti*) or the person of the form of shadow (*chāyāmayaḥ puruṣaḥ*). Each one of these definitions is refuted by the King who points out the subordinate position which each of these *Puruṣas* occupies in the whole of Nature. Gārgya is silenced by these refutations and, unable to proceed further with the discussion, requests the King to teach him the subject. Using the illustration of the deep-sleeper and sermonizing over it, the King comes to the conclusion that He is *Ātman* in whom the vital breaths (*prāṇāḥ*) lie dormant and from whom, on his waking they issue, along with the worlds, the gods, and the living creatures. As the spider comes out with its thread, as small sparks spring forth from fire, so do all the senses, all the worlds, all gods and all living creatures come forth from that Self (*yathorṇanābhis tantunoccared yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranti evamevāsmād ātmanas sarve prāṇās sarve lokās sarve devās sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti*).[2]

The second dialogue[3] is between *Vidagdha S'ākalya* and *Yājñavalkya* where the former, in a similar attempt to define *Brahman* as forming the climax of all that the word *Ātman* denotes (*sarvasyātmanaḥ parāyaṇaṁ*), posits eight successive times the one-sided view that represents the Earth (*Pṛthivī*),

[1] In the slightly varied version of the story which occurs in the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (Chap. IV), Gārgya attempts sixteen times to define *Brahman*, the additions being Echo (*pratis'ruti*), Sleep (*svapna*), Right Eye (*dakṣiṇākṣi*) and the Left Eye (*savyākṣi*) which are respectively identified as Life (*asu*), Lord of the Dead (*Yama*), Speech (*vāk*), and Truth (*satya*).

[2] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I. 1. 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, III. ix. 10 ff.

Desire (*Kāma*), Forms (*Rūpa*), Ether (*Ākās'a*), Darkness (*Tamas*), Forms (*Rūpāṇi*), Life (*Asu*) and Seed (*Retas*) as its basis. Yājñavalkya corrects him each time by telling him that what he is propounding as Brahman is only a subordinate person (*Puruṣa*) who rules in the bodily forms. The dialogue concludes with Yājñavalkya pointing out that whatever has been explained by S'ākalya refers only to the eight abodes, the eight worlds, the eight gods and the eight persons, and that the person (*Puruṣa*) of the Upaniṣads is one who divides and then unites these persons, and who passes beyond them (*etāny aṣṭāvāyatanāny aṣṭau lokā aṣṭau devā aṣṭau puruṣās sa yas tān puruṣān niruhya pratyuhyātyakrāmat taṁ tv aupaniṣadam puruṣam pṛcchāmi*).[1] S'ākalya is asked to name this *Puruṣa* on pain of losing his head, and as he is unable to do so, the story goes, that he suffered the dreadful penalty for having had the impudence to pass off a subordinate *Puruṣa* as the highest Ātman (*sarvasyātmanaḥ parāyaṇaṁ*).

The debators in the third dialogue[2] are King *Janaka* of Videha and the great Upaniṣadic seer *Yājñavalkya*. The latter, it is recounted, once enters the court of the former who, seeing him, enquires about the object of his visit, whether he was in need of cattle or of (disputations) culminating in subtle points (*aṇvantāni*). Yājñavalkya replies that he went to him for both and asks the King to tell him beforehand what others might have told him (regarding the nature of the highest Brahman). Janaka informs him in reply that *Brahman* is Speech (*Vāk*) according to *Jitvan S'aivalini*, Breath (*Prāṇa*) according to *Udaṅka S'aulbāyana*, Sight (*Cakṣus*) according to *Barku Vārṣṇa*, Ear (*S'rotra*) according to *Gardabhīvipīta Bhāradvāja*, Mind (*Manas*) according to

[1] *Ibid.*, III. ix. 26.
[2] *Ibid.*, IV. i.

Satyakāma Jābāla and the Heart (*Hṛdaya*) according to *Vidagdha S'ākalya.* Yājñavalkya finds fault with all these definitions each of which, according to him, emphasizes only one particular phase of *Brahman*; to him, *Vāk, Prāṇa, Cakṣus, S'rotra, Manas* and *Hṛdaya* have each a body (*āyatana*) and a resting place (*pratiṣṭhā*) which needs specification.

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V. 11) gives a similar story of *five* brahmins and *Uddālaka Āruṇi* whose view that the *Ātman* is Heaven (*Divaḥ*), Sun (*Ādityaḥ*), Wind (*Vāyuḥ*), Space (*Ākā-s'aḥ*), Water (*Āpaḥ*) and the Earth (*Pṛthivī*) is corrected by King *As'vapati* who points out that the Universal Soul (*Vais'-vānara Ātman*) is of the measure of the span (*Prades'amātram abhivimānaṁ*), having the lustrous (Heaven) for its head, the manifold (Sun) for its eye, the many-pathed (Wind) for its breath, the extended (Space) for its body, Riches (Water) for its bladder, the support (Earth) for its feet, the sacrificial altar (*Vedi*) for its abdomen, the sacrificial grass (*Barhi*) for its hair, the *Gārhapatya* fire for its heart, the *Anvāhāryapacana* fire for its mind, and the *Āhavanīya* fire for its mouth (*ete vai khalu yūyaṁ pṛthagivemam ātmānaṁ vais'vānaraṁ vidvāṁso annam āttha, yastv etam evaṁ prades'amātram abhivimānam ātmānaṁ vais'vānaram upāste 'sa sarveṣu lokeṣu sarveṣu bhūteṣu sarveṣv ātmasv annam atti tasya ha vā etasyātmano vais'vānarasya mūrdhaiva sutejās' cakṣur vis'varūpaḥ prāṇaḥ pṛthagvartmā ātmā sandeho bahulo bastireva rayiḥ pṛthivyeva pādau ura eva vedir lomāni barhir hṛdayaṁ gārhapatyo mano' nvāhāryapacana āsyam āhavanīyaḥ*).[1]

Similarly, the *S'vetās'vatara Upaniṣad* (I. 1) opens with the question "What is the First Beginning, what is Brahman?" (*kiṁ kāraṇaṁ brahma kutaḥ sma jātāḥ* . . .) and

[1] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V. 18.

the *Prasna Upaniṣad* (I. 1) and the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad* [1] speak of wise men coming together in their quest for *Brahman* (*paraṁ brahma anveṣamāṇāḥ*).

The Upaniṣadic seers often indulge in symbolism and *Brahman* is then represented by them by some form which is cognisable through the senses. It is then understood as *Nāman*, *Vāk*, *Manas*, *Saṅkalpa*, *Citta*, *Dhyāna*, *Vijñāna*, *Bala*, *Anna*, *Āpaḥ*, *Tejas*, *Ākāsa*, *Smara*, *Āsā*, *Prāṇa* and *Bhūman*,[2] or as *Āditya*,[3] or as the gastric fire,[4] or even as the syllable "Om".[5] For all purposes of worship, these are as good as *Brahman*, and are related to it as the images are to the deities they represent.[6]

Regarding the essence of *Brahman*, it is said that it is neither *Sat* nor *Asat* [7], that it is composed of consciousness (*Cit*),[8] and Bliss (*Ānanda*).[9] It is also usual to describe *Brahman* as of unknowable essence,[10] as of a negative character, as causeless,[11] and as devoid of spacial [12] and temporal [13] limitations.

[1] *Adyar Library MS.*, IX. B. 184, fol 46 ff.; The text of this *Upaniṣad* was reproduced with a translation by S. K. Belvalkar in the *Report of the Third Oriental Conference*, Madras, 1924, pp 31 ff. The subject-matter of the Upaniṣad is a conversation between the sages *Visvāmitra*, *Jamadagni*, *Bhāradvāja*, *Gautama* and *Vasiṣṭha* regarding the true nature of *Brahman*.

[2] See, for instance, *Ch. Up.*, Chap. VII; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I. 1. 9.

[3] *Ch. Up.*, III. 19.

[4] *Ibid.*, III. 13. 8; *Bṛ. Up.*, VI. 9.

[5] *Ch. Up.*, I. 1; *Pras. Up.*, V (1-7); *Muṇḍ. Up.*, II. 3 ff; *Taitt. Up.*, I. 8 etc.

[6] *Saṅkara* on *Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*, VI. 2. 1.

[7] *Ch. Up.*, III. 19. 1; *Taitt. Up.*, II. 7; *Bṛ. Up.*, II. 3. 1.

[8] For instance, *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. 3 ff.

[9] See especially, *Taitt. Up.*, II. 2.

[10] *Ch. Up.*, VIII. 1. 5 etc.

[11] Especially, *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. 4. 20.

[12] *Bṛ. Up.*, III. 8. 7; IV. 2. 4 etc.

[13] See especially, *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. 4. 16 ff.

By the term *Ātman* what is usually understood in the Upaniṣads is the individual Self of man, stripped of all that is in him which is Non-self, which is temporary, which is perishable, which came from without, and which is subject to the limitations of Time and Place.[1]

Inasmuch as both the terms *Brahman* and *Ātman* denote the "First Principle" in the Universe, a promiscuous employment of them is sometimes made in the Upaniṣads. Thus the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V. 11) says that five great householders, deeply learned in sacred lore (*S'rotriyāḥ*) met together and formulated the question "Who is the *Ātman*? What is *Brahman* (*ko nu ātmā, kiṁ brahmeti*)." We find here that in a common text the two terms stand side by side almost in a synonymous relation.[2]

The term *Brahman* occurs in the Ṛgveda both in masculine and neuter; in the former gender it occurs twenty-four times and in the latter ninety-one times.

The masculine form of Brahman [*Brahmā* (accent on the second syllable)] is not found in Maṇḍalas III and VI of the Ṛgveda; it occurs once each in Maṇḍalas V and VII, twice in Maṇḍala II, three times each in Maṇḍalas I, IV, IX, and five times each in Maṇḍalas VIII and X. Twelve times[3] the word is used in the sense of the 'brahmin singer' (*brāhmaṇaḥ stotā*), four times[4] in the sense of the 'great or mighty' (*parivṛdhaḥ*), once[5] in the sense of the 'Creator' (*prajāpatiḥ*), once[6]

[1] *Ch. Up.*, IV. 15; V. 16; V. 10. 3; V. 10. 8; *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. 4. 5 etc; *Kaṭh. Up.*, I. 1. 20 etc.

[2] Cf. Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 86.

[3] RV. I. 80. 1; IV. 50. 8; V. 40. 8; VIII. 7. 20; 33. 19; 64. 7; 92. 30; IX. 112. 1; 113. 6; X. 85. 34, 35; 117. 7.

[4] RV. I. 158. 6; IV. 58. 2; VII 7. 5; VIII. 16. 7.

[5] RV. I. 164. 35.

[6] RV. II. 1. 3.

as a name of *Bṛhaspati*, five times [1] in the sense of the Brahmā priest, and once [2] in the sense of 'prayer'.

The form [*Brahmāṇaḥ* (accent on the second syllable)] occurs nine times; once (I. 10. 1) in the sense of the 'sacrificial priests', once (V. 31. 4) in the sense of 'Aṅgirases or Maruts', twice (V. 29. 3; 32. 12) in the sense of the 'mighty' (*bṛhantah*), and five times [3] in the sense of the 'brahmin singers' (*brāhmāṇāḥ stotāraḥ*). The word [*Brahmāṇā'iva* (accent on the second syllable)] which also occurs only once (II. 39. 1) is taken by Sāyaṇa to mean 'brahmins'.

The masculine form of *Brahman* in the objective case [*Brahmāṇam* (accent on the second syllable)] occurs five times; twice (VI. 45. 7; X. 77. 1) it is taken by Sāyaṇa to mean the 'great or mighty'; twice (X. 125. 5; X. 141. 3) in the sense of the 'creator' (*prajāpatiḥ* or *sraṣṭā*), and once (X. 107. 6) in the sense of 'brahmin'.

The occurrence of the word *Brahman* in the neuter is far more abundant; its nominative singular form *Brahma* (accent on the first syllable)] occurs ninety-one times; fifty-seven times [4] it is used, according to Sāyaṇa, in the sense of 'prayer' (*stotra* or *s'astra*), twenty-two times [5] in the sense of 'food, sacrificial or ordinary' (*anna* or *havis*), once (X. 114. 8) in the sense of the 'cause of the Universe' (*jagatkāraṇaṁ vastu*), six times [6] in the sense of a 'great act' (*parivṛdhaṁ karma*), twice (VIII. 35. 16; 37. 1) in the sense of 'brahmin', once (IX. 67. 23) in the sense of the 'body' (*putrādivardhanakārı*

[1] RV. II. 1. 2; IV. 9. 4; IX. 96. 6; X. 52. 2; 71. 11.

[2] RV. VIII. 31. 1.

[3] RV. VII. 42. 1; VIII. 17. 3; 96. 5; X. 85. 3, 16.

[4] RV. I. 62. 13; 75. 2; II. 20. 5; 34. 7; III. 41. 3; IV. 6. 11; V. 29. 15, VI. 17. 3; X. 61. 1 and so on.

[5] RV. I. 10. 4; II. 41. 18; III. 8. 2; IV. 22. 1; VI. 16. 36; VII. 31. 11; VIII. 3. 9; X. 4. 7 etc.

[6] RV. I. 105. 15; 129. 4; 152. 5, 7; VIII. 69. 9; IX. 86. 41.

s'arīram), once (IX. 71. 1) in the sense of the 'great' (*bṛhat*), and once (X. 61. 7) in the sense of 'Rudra'.

In the possessive case, the word occurs thirty-seven times; thirty-three times[1] it occurs as part of the compound *Brahmaṇaspatiḥ*, once (III. 29. 15) in the sense of the 'generator of the Universe' (*sarvasya jagatas srastuḥ*), once (VIII. 97. 3), in the sense of 'food' (*annasya*), once (VI. 52. 3) in the sense of 'prayer' (*mantrasya karmaṇaḥ*) and once (IX. 97. 43) to mean 'great' (*parivṛdhasya*).

Similarly, the form *Brahmaṇaḥ* (accent on the second syllable) occurs two times, *Brahmaṇaḥ* (without accent) fifteen times, *Brahmaṇā* (accent on the first syllable) thirty-one times, *Brahmāṇaṁ* (accent on the first syllable) two times, *Brahmaṇāṁ* (accent on the first syllable) once, *Brahmaṇi* (accent on the first syllable) and *Brahmāṇi* (accent on the second syllable) once each, *Brahmaṇe* (accent on the first syllable) nine times, and *Brahmaṇe* (accent on the second syllable) two times. Besides these independent occurrences noticed above, the word *Brahman* occurs many times as part of compounds like *Brahmakilbiṣe*, *Brahmadviṣaḥ*, *Brahma-kārāḥ*, *Subrahmaṇyam*, *Abrahmatā*, *Subrahmā Abrahmā*, *Abrahmāṇaḥ*, *Ohabrahmāṇaḥ*, *Subrahmāṇam*, *Tuvibrahmāṇam* and *Brahmayujā*. In all these places, the word is used in one or the other of the senses mentioned above.

Some forms of the word *Brahman* occur in the *Nirukta* also; the masculine form in the nominative singular occurs once (I. 8) and is taken by Yāska to mean a 'priest'; the neuter form in the same case and number occurs twice, and is used once (II. 11) to mean a 'brahmin' and the other time (VI. 22) to mean 'prayer'; the nominative plural of the masculine form

[1] RV. I. 18. 4; II. 23. 19; V. 46. 3; VI. 75. 17; VII. 44. 1; VIII. 27. 1; X. 53. 9 etc.

occurs twice (V. 5 ; XI. 4) and in both the contexts it is taken by Yāska to mean " brahmin " and the neuter form in the same case and number occurs but once (XII. 34) in the *Nirukta* and is understood as 'prayers' (*karmāṇi*) ; in the vocative singular, the masculine form occurs twice (II. 4 ; V. 14) and Yāska takes it to mean 'O ! brahmin'.

So much for the meaning of *Brahman* in the Ṛgveda as interpreted by ancient commentators. We will now take up for consideration the meanings given to the word by modern scholars. It was the view of Bopp [1] that the etymology of this word is doubtful, and Lassen [2] supported him by pointing out that the suggested derivation of *Brahman* from the root *bṛh* is not acceptable seeing that *bṛh* can, in its guṇated form, become only *Barhman* not *Brahman*. The general tendency with other scholars is, however, to take *bṛh*, 'to swell', or 'to grow', as the original root. Pott [3] thus held that *Brahman* is derived from the root *bṛh*, and that, though it originally signified the god, it later came to mean worshipper also. This view found acceptance at the hands of Grassmann, [4] Fick,[5] Bergaigne,[6] Delbruck,[7] Deussen,[8] and Lanman.[9]

Martin Haug [10] derives *Brahman* from the root *bṛh* (originally *barh*) which, according to Sanskrit grammar

[1] *Sündfluth*, p. xix (1829), cited by J. Charpentier, *Brahman*, p 3.

[2] *Ind. Bibl.*, III. 48 (1830), cited by Charpentier, *loc. cit.*

[3] *Et. Forsch.*, I. 250 ; III. 944 ff. ; Charpentier, *Ibid.*

[4] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 916 ; Charpentier, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[5] *Vgl. Wb.*, I. 380 ; I. 263, cited by Charpentier, *loc. cit.*

[6] *La Religion Védique*, II. 273 ff.

[7] *Vedachrestomathie*, 93, cited by Charpentier, *op. cit.*

[8] *System des Vedanta*, pp. 51, 127 ff. ; *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I. 1. 241.

[9] *Sanskrit Reader*, p. 202.

[10] Introduction to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, p. 4 n. ; *Brahman und die Brahmanen* (cited by F. Max Müller, *Theosophy* (Gifford Lectures, 1892), pp. 240 ff.

means 'to grow', 'to swell', so that the original meaning of the word is 'that which grows or swells'; and a proof of this is seen by him in the corresponding Avestan word *baresma* which means a bundle of twigs used by the Parsi priests when performing the *Izeshan* sacrifices. He next assigns to *Brahman* the more abstract meaning of growth and welfare, and what causes them both, *viz.*, sacred songs. Lastly, he understands by *Brahman* 'the productive power in nature, which manifests itself in the growth of plants, and all other creatures'. "When by a well-known grammatical process this neuter *Brahman* (nom. *Brahma*) is changed into the masculine *Brahman* (nom. *Brahmā*), it comes to mean 'a man conversant with *Brahman*, a member of the priestly class'; secondly, a priest charged with the special duty of superintending the sacrifice, but likewise the personal creator, the universal force conceived as a personal god, the same as *Prajāpati*, and in later times one of the *Trimūrti*, Brahman, Viṣṇu and S'iva."[1]

Osthoff[2] connects *Brahman* with the old Irish word *bricht* which means 'magic, magic formula', and finds following in Oldenberg[3] and Hillebrandt[4]. Oldenberg also maintains[5] that in most passages of the Ṛgveda *Brahman* means simply 'priest', that the Brahman priest known to this Veda was the *Brāhmaṇācchaṁsin*. The Purohita, who was essentially not a member of the ordinary body of

[1] Max Müller, *Ibid.*

[2] *Bezz. Beiter.*, XXIV (1899), 113 ff., cited by Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, I. 247.

[3] Winternitz, *Ibid.*, as in his *Lehre der Upanishaden*, pp. 44 ff.

[4] ERE., II. 796 ff.

[5] *Religion des Veda*, pp. 396, 397; Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names und Subjects*, II. 78.; cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, X. 376, 377. To Oldenberg's 'Zauberfluidum' theory, F. Preisigke (*Vom göttlichen Fluidum nach ägyptischer Anschauung*, 1920) finds a parallel in Egypt.

sacrificing priests (*ṛtvij*), was, when he officiated at the sacrifice, more usually the *Hotṛ* priest, and only later became the *Brahman*. This change took place when the importance of the hymns declined, and more weight was laid on the functions of the priest who superintended the sacrifice as a whole, and by his magic repaired the flaws in the sacrifice.[1] An almost identical view is held by Geldner[2] also who sees the sense of 'priest' in a large number of passages of the Ṛgveda, and who holds that the sense of 'superintending priest' is older and is clear in passages like RV. I. 158. 6; IV. 9. 4; 50. 7, 8; VII. 7. 5; 33. 11; X. 141. 3.

Hillebrandt[3] follows Haug also in understanding *Brahman* as the latent electric power stirred up by such apparatus as the sacred vessels, or hymns, or chants, at the time of the performance of a ceremony. The senses of *Brahman* are developed by him thus: the bundle of plants used as a spell to secure growth or fertility; the magic power which permeates the sacrifice; the several kinds of magic, such as formula, recitation, or song; and creative power in general, which develops into *Brahman* as creative.

Hertel[4] connects *Brahman* with the etymologically corresponding words in Greek and Latin, and attempts to prove that the original meaning of the words was 'fire', both the internal fire in man and the cosmic fire.

[1] cf. Pischel, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1894), p. 420; Hillebrandt *Ritual-litteratur*, p. 13; Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, lxviii; *Atharvaveda*, p. 32.

[2] *Vedische Studien*, II. 145 et seq.; III. 155; *Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, I. 122 ff.; Charpentier, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 ff.

[3] ERE., II. 797 ff.; *Festgabe Jacobi*, pp. 265 ff. At one time it was his view that *Brahman* was *das magische Fluidum ritueller Zauberkraft* [*Vedische Mythologie* (1910), p. 61]; Keith, *Jhā Commemoration Volume*, p. 203.

[4] *Das Brahman* in *Indogermanische Forschungen*, XLI (1923), pp. 185 ff, Winternitz, *loc. cit.*

The word has to be understood in the light of the Greek *φλέγμα*, which in the *Iliad* (XXI. 337) appears to mean "flame" and is held to be connected with Latin *flamma* and *fulgeo*. "We are invited to believe that *Brahman* denotes primarily and properly the cosmic fire which exists beyond the stone heaven and which is revealed by breaks in that barrier as the sun, moon, constellations, and so on. This cosmic fire is present also in the microcosm, man, as the Ātman, and thus the oldest form of religion reached presents us implicitly with the identification of which the Upaniṣads make so much, that of Brahman and Ātman. The doctrine is also Indo-Iranian for the Avesta has the same doctrine of the cosmic fire. It is not claimed that the sense "fire" is living in the Ṛgveda in its simplest meaning. The sense there is that fire which incorporates wisdom and appears in the cosmic Brahman as the power of thought, which is located in the heart, the seat of thought in the view of Indo-Europeans."[1] As Keith[2] points out there is a good deal of difficulty in accepting this etymology proposed for *Brahman*. In the first place, the fact cannot be ignored that the comparison of the terms is far from cogent. That the Indian *h* should correspond to Greek *γ* is most unusual. It seems to be for the same reason that Johansson 'dismissed the comparison as the fancy of a dilettante who was not master of the principles of linguistic science'.[3] Though Hirt[4] considers the suggestion worth notice, it is clear anyhow that it has no probative power. Nor does it seem to be possible to adduce any other evidence to

[1] A. B. Keith in his article *New Theories as to Brahman* in the *Jhā Commemoration Volume* (Poona, 1937), pp. 199 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.

[3] Cited by J. Charpentier, *Brahman* (1932), p. 13 n.

[4] *Indogerm. Gramm.*, I. 248.

justify the validity of the proposed connection with φλέγμα. When the use of *Brahman* in the Ṛgveda and later is considered, it is absolutely clear that " fire " cannot have been the root idea of the term. The same consideration applies to other terms like *yakṣa*, the Avestan *cithra*, the Indian *dhenā*, Avestan *daēnā*, the Indian *vasu* and the Avestan *vohu* in which it is not easy to see the sense of light or fire. It is also difficult to agree with the view that the root *pū* is connected with Greek πῦρ " fire ", or his view that the roots *dhī* and *dī* have but one meaning " shine ".

Scherer [1] seems to be another adherent of the same school when he feels that in *Brahman* is contained the common name for poet and priest in the most ancient period; Skt. [*Brahman* (accent on the second syllable)] = Lat. *flâmen* [2] = Old Norse *brag-r*, *Brag-i* (the god of poetry and eloquence) [3]; with the Old Norse *brag-na* in *bragnar* is compared the Greek βραγ-χο-, βραχο-νο-; the earlier common priest-name was preserved only in the guardians of the oracle at Didyma, the descendants of βραγκος, the βραγκίδαι.

According to Muir, [4] *Brahman* in the neuter is generally used in the sense of prayer or hymn, while the masculine form of the word denotes the person who composes or repeats a hymn or prayer. This original meaning of the masculine form later changes, according to Muir, when the ceremonial became more complex and a division of sacred functions took place, and the word came to be employed more

[1] *Anz. f. d. Alt.*, Vol. IV (1878), p. 100, cited by Adolf Kaegi, *Der Rigveda* (Trans. by Arrowsmith), p. 122.

[2] Leo Meyer, *Vergleich. Gramm.*, II. 275 ff.

[3] Grimm, *Mythology* (3rd Edn.), p. 215.

[4] *Original Sanskrit Texts*, I. 241 ff. This is accepted by Whitney (OLST.) I. 68. 1), Weber, HIL., 11 ; IST., IX. 351 f.) and Kaegi (*Rigveda*, p. 4, 99 n.)

generally at first for a minister of public worship and later to signify one particular kind of priest with special duties.[1]

To Deussen,[2] the word *Brahman* means, in the whole of the Ṛgveda, nothing more than the 'lifting and spiritualizing power of prayer'.

Max Müller feels that though the idea of creative force or propelling power might well have been expressed by *Brahman*, the neuter word, taken to mean 'hymn or prayer' should have had originally the more general meaning of 'speech or word'.[3]

The *St. Petersburg Lexicon* of Roth and Böhtlingk (V. 135 ff.) gives six meanings of the word *Brahman* which is derived here also from the root *barh*; the first meaning given here runs: *Die als Drang und Fülle des Gemüths auftretende und den Göttern zustrebende Andacht* which paraphrased means "the devotion which appears as the craving and fulness of the Soul, and striving towards the gods;" the second meaning is 'a sacred or magic formula' (*Heiliger Spruch*); then 'sacred words' (*Heiliges Wort*), as opposed to words used for ordinary purposes; then 'sacred wisdom' (*Heilige Weisheit*) and 'holy life' (*Heiliges Leben*), and lastly, the absolute or impersonal god (*Der höchste Gegenstand der Theosophie, der unpersönlich gedachte Gott, das Absolutum*).

In the opinion of Winternitz[4] these explanations are diametrically opposed to the Indian conception of the relationship between gods and men, however much they may correspond to Jewish-Christian ideas of divinity. Any attempt at

[1] Muir, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

[2] *System of Vedanta*, p. 49.

[3] *Gifford Lectures* (1892), pp. 241 ff.; *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* pp. 53 ff.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 248 ff.

etymological derivation of the word *Brahman* is, to him, futile. His own view is that, among the numerous occurrences of the word in the Veda, ' there is no where any thought of devotion or exaltation to the divine ' ; it always means mere formulae and verses containing secret magic power, by which man desires to influence divine beings, or to obtain, or even to force something from them. Later, when divine origin was ascribed to the Veda, when the sacrifice itself was conceived as a superhuman, nay super-divine power, this *Brahman* or sacred knowledge came to be called the first created thing (*brahma prathamajaṁ*), and finally even made the creative principle, the cause of all existence (*brahma svayambhu*). *Brahman* as the divine principle is thus a conception of the priestly philosophy, and is quite explicable in the light of the brahmanical views upon prayer and sacrifice.

Two more views have been recently advanced, inspired by the suggestion brought forward by Haug and, to a good extent, supporting it, the one by Charpentier and the other by M. Dumézil. Taking up a position quite analogous to that taken up by Hillebrandt, Charpentier[1] maintains that *Brahman* is identical with Avestan *baresman*, and that originally it meant nothing more than the bundle of grass used by the priests in the ritual. It is suggested that there was an Indo-Iranian *bharzh-man* and *bharzh-is* which are represented in Avestan by *baresman* and *barezis*, while the Vedic gives us *Brahman* for *Barhman* and *barhis*. Keith finds it difficult to find much that is cogent in this conjecture. The suggestion that the words *Brahman* and *baresman* are identic, though not impossible, is not probable ; there is far more likelihood of *Brahman* and *barhis* not being connected at all, but going back to different

[1] *Brahman*, pp. 61 ff. ; Keith, *Jhā Commemoration Volume*, p. 202.

roots. It is not on etymological possibilities that attempt can be made to validate the proposed identity of *Brahmaṇ* and *bares'man*. The evidence required here is 'that the supposed sense of *Brahman* explains satisfactorily its later uses, and that the explanation is more probable than others current '.[1]

It would be worth our while following the line of argument with which Charpentier[2] supports his theory. The meaning of the word *Brahman* is developed in a two-fold way; one of these is to follow Oldenberg and attempt at settling the original meaning, that is, at the point where the word appears as meaning simply a song (*Lied*), hymn (*Hymnus*) or sacred text (*heiliger Text*); the other is to carry the development to the cosmogonic *Brahman*, that is, the mystic, All-Immanent Primordial Being (*des mystischen alldurchdringenden Urwesens*). Though this development remains dark and uncertain, there is no doubt that this Primordial Being, this Cosmic Power can have developed only from the most original meaning of the word. Further, *Brahman* has adopted the meaning of Brahminhood, and here is to be seen an entirely secondary kind of development.

Now, coming to the original meaning of *Brahman*, we are to believe with Charpentier that, in the Indo-Iranian period, priests in India and Iran performed magic rites (*Zauberriten*) with the help of rods or wands (*Ruten*), bundles of plants (*Pflanzenbundeln*), and grass (*Opferstreu*). These were the Brahman rites, and their performers were the Brahmans. It should be assumed that these special rites have always been accompanied by definite conjurations (*Beschwörungen*) and magical incantations (*Zaubersprüche*) which are composed in

[1] Keith, *Ibid*.

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 124 ff. The following is only an epitome in English of Charpentier's own summary of his position given at the end of his German work.

metrical form. When sacrifices rose into importance, minor independent rites lost their importance, several of them forming often a big complex sacrifice of which the Brahman priest became the chief officer. As the ceremonial developed thus, the connection between the idea of Brahman and the grass etc., relaxed ; and from its original connotation of plants, wands, and bundle of grass to be strewn, from its further meaning, through contraction or some kind of inexplicable association of the magic rites with plants (*kultischen Pflanzen-zauberriten*), came to mean customary magic rites (*ausgeübte Zauberriten*). This is the meaning met with quite often even in the Ṛgveda.

In the pre-Vedic cults, sacrifice (*Opfer*) and performances of magic (*Zauber-handlungen*) formed the chief things, while the sacrificial songs belonging to it had been quite undeveloped and constituted mainly of conjurations (*Beschwörungen*) and simple invocations to gods (*einfachen Götteranrufungen*). But when the ritual was generally developed, the songs in sacrifice (*Opferliedern*) which were composed artistically and which were always current within families of musicians, came to gain prominence. There is ample proof for this assumption in the Ṛgveda where naturally there is contained the kernel of old sacrificial and magic songs which are always interwoven with the newly developed artistic poetry. It is also noteworthy that a large number of hymns which originally had nothing to do with the performances of sacrifices, have been made use of in later rituals. Thus it is that the sacrificial (*opfer*) and magic song (*Zauberlied*) came to attain a value equal to the rite of which originally it was only an accompaniment, and rite, and song or incantation, was designated by the same name (*Ritus und Lied oder Spruch mit demselben Namen zu bezeichnen*)[1]. In this way, the word *Brahman*

[1] Charpentier, *op. cit.*, pp. 126 ff.

which originally meant 'magic (-rite)' [*Zauber* (*ritus*)] changed so thoroughly so as to mean also 'magic incantation' (*Zauberspruch*) and 'magic song' (*Zauberlied*), because of the association of the Vedic sacrifices with magic rites. The songs belonging to these sacrifices have also to be designated 'magic songs' or 'magic incantations' (*Zauberlieder oder Zaubersprüche*). In any case, they were not prayers (*Gebete*). When the poets openly invoked the gods for the sake of material ends, they certainly knew the strength these gods had and which they could wield at will. This strength (*Macht*) becomes firmly associated with magical rites and magical songs. Griswold[1] and Oldenberg[2] are right in saying that in many places the word *Brahman* can designate only hymns or old texts, for the simple reason that it is not possible to find any real difference between sacred text (*heiliger Text*) and magic song or incantation (*Zauberlied,-spruch*) in the Veda. Oldenberg infers on the strength of RV. VI. 38. 3 and 4, that *Brahman* appears in the Veda most often along with words *uktha, ucatha, vacas, arka, stoma, gir, manman* and *mantra*. So far this is correct; but to compare, on this account, with *Brahman* all these words which not even once have the same significance would entirely be wrong. It is impossible to think that in such a rich language like the Veda, full of refinement and artistic equipment, synonymous words could be used together without any purpose at all. If today we are not able to see any difference in meaning between these words, they cannot have been of equal value to the Ṛgvedic poets also; much less could they be identical semantically. By such usages we are to understand

[1] *Brahman: a Study in the History of Indian Philosophy* (New York, 1900).

[2] *GN.* (1916), pp. 715 ff.

only a particular kind of writing poetry. Properly speaking, *Brahman* can be understood in all these places by magic incantation (*Zauberspruch*) or magic song (*Zauberlied*). Moreover, there are a large number of places[1] where only one meaning can be correct, that is, magic song (*Zauberlied*) or conjuration (*Beschwörung*). From these considerations, there should be no doubt that the meaning of *Brahman* has developed successsively from 'plant-magic' (*Pflanzenzauber*) to 'magic' (*Zauber*) in general, and from this stage to 'magical song' (*Zauberlied*) or 'formula' (*Spruch*).

The development of the cosmogonic[2] *Brahman* is not, however, so easily understood, though Oldenberg and other scholars treat this subject rather lightly. Haug and Hillebrandt may possibly be right when they develop a cosmogonic All-Being from the meaning "The driving force of the entire nature" (*Triebkraft der ganzen Natur*); but this explanation appears a little abstract and strained. A word whose real meaning is 'magic' (*Zauber*) or magic-performance (*Zauberhandlung*), can denote also a 'magical being' (*Zauberwesen*) besides a 'magician' (*Zauberer*). This is undoubtedly the case with the Old Indian *Yātu* whose original meaning of apparition, sorcery (*Spuk*, *Hexerei*) is even today so clear in RV. V. 12. 2 and VIII. 60. 20, while in many places in the AV. (VII. 21, 5; 104. 21 etc.,) it means 'a class of magical demons' (*Klass von zauberischen Dämonen*), met with in many forms. The Avestan *Yātu* signifies 'magic, sorcery' (*Zauber, Hexerei*), although Bartholomae[3] gives the word only the meaning *Zauberer* (magician). Then it is quite correct that under 'magicians' (*Zauberer*), a supernatural magical being

[1] RV. I. 24. 11; 162. 17; VII. 83. 4; VIII. 89. 3 etc.

[2] Charpentier, *op. cit.*, pp. 133 ff.

[3] *Altiranische Wörterbuch*, p. 1283 f.

(*übernatürliches Zauberwesen*) is also understood. This can be proved through the common association of the *Yātu* and the *Pairikā*, because the *Pairikās* remind us of the Indian *Apsaras* since the word also means 'sorceress or witch' (*Zauberin, Hexe*), really only a supernatural being. In *Yātu* there is an Indo-Iranian word with the double meaning of magic (*Zauber*) and magical being (*Zauberwesen*). More or less the same relation is found in the Old *rākṣas*. The *St. Petersburg Lexicon* takes the word to mean 'harm' (*Beschädigung*), but this meaning is too abstract. It will be more correct to understand it to mean *Zauber* (magic or sorcery). In many places in the RV. and AV. the word denotes 'nocturnal fiend' (*nächtlicher Unhold*), especially 'a harmful being which defiles and obstructs sacrifice' (*Zauberwesen . . . das die Opfer befault und zerstört*). The Avestan *rasah* can simply mean 'harming or harm' (*Schädigung, Schaden*), because this kind of harming is associated with people having foes. So one must at least think of that kind of harming which arises from ill-will. Under these circumstances, it seems possible to assume that besides *Brahman* meaning magic (*Zauber*), there could have existed also a *Brahman* meaning magical being (*Zauberwesen*), although the line of such a meaning is completely lost. Many Vedic passages can be adduced, but of them all RV. X. 61. 7 appears directly to signify a 'magical meaning'. The story dealt with here is well known. The gods wanted to punish Prajāpati for his illicit love for his daughter, and for this purpose created Rudra, a terrible god, who is a conglomeration of all dreadful forms. It is possible to think that it is this wonderful being that is meant when the poet mentions *Brahman* in this verse. The passage in the *Kenopaniṣad* (III. 1 ff.) where the cosmogonic *Brahman* himself appeared before the gods in a form which

they could not recognize, may also be adduced in this context. The word *Yakṣa* here means something like 'magical being' (*Zauberwesen*), and is completely identical with the word *Brahman* appearing in this meaning in RV. X. 61. 7. It is not impossible that *Brahman* (=*Zauberwesen*) got confused in course of time with the cosmogonic *Brahman.* It is not easy to trace the definite phases of this development, but it can be assumed that at a very early time this meaning of *Zauberwesen* got identified with certain primitive cosmogonic divinites, and above all with the so-called Prajāpati, and that, in this way, the impersonal cosmogonic *Brahman* as also the *Brahman* considered as the personal creator of the world came into existence.

In the *Yajurveda* and in the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Brahman* is identified with *kṛs'ānu*, the skin of the black antelope, to which there have been ascribed all kinds of wonderful peculiarities. It is used by ascetics and *brahmacārins*, and during *dīkṣā* it is considered to possess the high magical power of driving away demons. Generally the dark antelope is very closely associated with brahminhood, so that the real brahmin shall live only in those places where this kind of animal is obtained. So far there is nothing particularly noteworthy if the skin of the antelope full of magical powers is identified with the mystical cosmogonic *Brahman.* This kind of identification becomes comprehensible if this *Brahman* is really a *Zauberwesen.* It is of special interest in this context to find in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (II. 1. 7)[1] that *Brahman* is identified with the brown sacrificial cow. In this connection it is not possible to ignore the introductory words of the well-known narration in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (II. 3. 8. 1). The original course of this myth has perhaps somehow

[1] This passage occurs also in *MS.*, II. 5. 7; *Kaṭh.*, XIII. 8.

or other gone over to the cosmogonic *Brahman* which any way comes near to the just identification of it with the black skin and the brown colour mentioned just now. There are also passages where *Brahman* appears by the side of *kṣatra* and other words signifying possession of armour, and it is possible to think that here also *Brahman* signifies *Zauberkraft* (magic power), *Brahmanenkraft* (brahman power), and in this way has come to mean brahminhood (*essentia brahmanica*).

Keith points out[1] that though the theory operates with real meanings found in the Ṛgveda and is as such far more defensible than those of Haug or Hertel, it is difficult to accept it because there is no proof that the term *Brahman* originally denoted the *Opferstreu.* It is merely a matter of conjecture, and it is quite open to accept another explanation of the way in which *Brahman* develops its meaning. Unless there is anything in the Ṛgveda to indicate that the sense *Opferstreu* clung to *Brahman*, the probability that this was the real sense is very slight. The passages adduced in this regard are far from supporting the idea that at one time *Brahman*, *veda* and *barhis* meant very much the same thing. In RV. II. 18. 7., *mama brahmendra yāhy acchā*, the suggestion that *Brahman* might be the same as *barhis* is sufficiently disproved by the next line *purutrā hi vihavyo babhūta.* Clearly *Brahman* denotes the prayer of the singer, which is to bring to his offering Indra as against the claims of other devotees. In RV. VII. 28. 1, we have again the invitation to come to our *Brahman*, followed by the quite decisive words *viśve cid dhi tvā vihavanta martāḥ*, showing that what is meant is prayer, not grass. Similarly, it can be proved that in other passages like RV. III. 8. 2; VII. 35. 7; I. 10. 4; 47. 2; 24. 11;

[1] Keith, *Jha Commemoration Volume*, pp. 204-206.

VIII. 62. 4; V. 40. 6; VII. 18. 4; 33. 3; III. 53. 12, 13, *Brahman* means only prayer, not necessarily any kind of spell. It is quite possible that even in the Vedic age there were as now, two types of mind, those who believed that the divine could be affected by elaborate ritual of magic type, and those who upheld the power of supplication, not to compel but to persuade the divine grace.

Concerning Charpentier's theory regarding the development of the cosmic sense, Keith [1] finds it hard to accept that there is a transition in the use of *Brahman* occasionally as *Zauberwesen*, on the ground that the evidence for such a use is minimal and far from cogent. In RV. X. 61. 7 wherein is described the incest of Prajāpati, all that we are told is that the gods applied the holy power that is within them, and so created Vāstoṣpati; whether Rudra is here thought of or not, matters little. Similarly, the supposition that in *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (V. 4. 4. 4), wherein the *kṛṣṇājina* is called the symbol (*rūpa*) of the *Brahman*, there is a reference to a *Zauberwesen* is groundless. Plainly understood, the sentence means that the black antelope skin is a characteristic of the brahman class, the incorporation of the holy power. Also the term *brahmacārin* need not denote one who practises abstinence or celibacy, but only 'one who practises holiness one who busies himself about the holy power, or who walks in the path of holiness'.

Still more revolutionary than the theory propounded by Charpentier, is the view held by M. Dumézil who devotes a study, *Flâmen-Brahman* [2], where he maintains a theory which not only resembles that of the former but also goes a long way to vindicate it.

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 207 ff.

[2] *Annales du Musée Guimet*, LI (1935).

It is Dumézil's contention that, from a common root *bhelgh*, it is possible to derive *Brahman*, *barhis*, *barha*, 'tail of a peacock,' *upabarhaṇa*, 'mattress', Latin *flâmen*, and in Greek φαρμᾰκός, applied to a scape-goat, φάρμᾰκον, 'remedy.' The religious, magic meaning which the word has need not be considered at present, but for the possibility of its comparison with *flâmen*, there is the sanction of such a great authority as Kretschmer.[1] It can be objected that, if *flag-ma* gives *flamma*, then *flag-men* would not be represented by *flâ-men*; but since it is seen that the Vergilian MSS. give the form *flam-men*, this objection is not serious. If it should be said that the comparison with φαρμᾰκός and φάρμᾰκον is untenable as a matter of strict comparison, since the Ionian poets have *a* in φαρμᾰκός, and the Attic short *a* may be due to the analogy of the neuter, it has to be pointed out that there are in Indo-European unaccountable divergences in words which must be ultimately the same as in the word for 'liver', Sanskrit *plīhā*, Greek σπλήν, Latin *lien*, Irish *selg*, Lithuanian *bluznis*, and so on. Keith[2] finds it difficult to accept the argument, for though identity of origin is possible for words in cases where there is essentially sameness of meaning, this is impossible where there is no such immediate sameness of meaning and divergence of form.

Dumézil's effort to establish this sameness, resting on a reconstruction of religious beliefs, is equally faulty. "Facinated by Sir J. Frazer's evidence in the *Golden Bough* of the connection between the King and vegetation and the death of the king to revive life in nature, he stresses the legend of S'unaḥs'epa as suggesting the former practice of slaying the son of the King or a substitute. With this he connects

[1] *Einleitung*, p. 127.; cf. Meillet, *Histoire de la langue latine*, p. 78.
[2] *op. cit.*, p. 209.

the accounts of victims treated as kings before sacrifice, and so evolves the theory that the Brahmans achieved their historical position, as originally the substitutes for the royal victim, treated for a time as royal, and thus made equivalent in value to the king for sacrificial purposes. The actual sacrifice would be performed, to judge from the S'unaḥs'epa legend, by other future victims of whom there would be a number, since the kingly sacrifice is needed to counter famine, epidemic among men and beasts, and perhaps periodically to strengthen the life of nature. Gradually actual sacrifices ceased to claim human victims; the Brahman, however, *sacratus et sacrans*, the recognized mediator between men and the supernatural powers, has secured his position and the caste is established. He had already drawn to himself concern with other sacrificial rites; he is the living aspect of those magic practices which are in some measure his equivalent, since they are called Brahman in the neuter; both are remedies to secure good. From this history we can understand the relation of the Brahmans and the Kṣatriyas in Indian History. The former claim, the latter concede, pre-eminence, but it is never carried into actuality; this is a reminiscence of the time when the real king and the fictive king, the permanent and the temporary, substitute, coexisted as indispensable to each other, but the substance of authority rested with the former, while the latter was accorded in theory higher or coequal rights. Further, the original character of the Brahman explains the position assigned in the texts to the Brahman priest in the narrow technical sense at the sacrifice. Thereat he neither acts nor speaks, but watches its course, prepared to intervene to remedy errors. But he obtains half the sacrificial gifts. Does this not denote that, unlike the other priests, he is consubstantial with

the sacrifice which he himself once was? Moreover, in the famous Puruṣa hymn (RV. X. 90) we have in mythical form a reflex of the ancient rite of the slaying of the king, transformed into a picture of the creation of the Universe, and of the Brahman as the highest of the castes, from the sacrifice of *Puruṣa*, who is none other than the Brahman *par excellence*."[1]

Keith[2] remarks that these arguments are, no doubt, quite ingenious, but the fact cannot be ignored that the foundation on which they stand is not at all sound. The S'unaḥs'epa legend offers no evidence to support the idea that, for the revival of the life of nature, the death of a royal victim is necessary. For the suggestion that in the As'vamedha, the Ātreya who is a scape-goat was originally killed, there is no evidence, much less for the idea that he was a representative of the king, who originally was offered to Varuṇa. The *Puruṣamedha* which is clearly a hypothetical rite, built by the sūtra-makers on the As'vamedha, is of no value as evidence. There is no hint in the Brāhmaṇas of an actual offering of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya therein. So also to deduce from the tale of Manu's proposed sacrifice of his wife in the *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṁhitā* (IV. 8. 1) that the king was at one time compelled to sacrifice his wife, is a mere flight of imagination, as is the further suggestion that Indra's action resulted, in the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* (II. 30), in slaying the two Brāhmaṇas who advised Manu's evil deed, reflects the offering of Brahmans as substitutes. In order to explain the high rank of the Brahmans or their entertainment by kings it is certainly not necessary to resort to this theory. The position of the Brahman priest at the

[1] Summarized by Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 ff., as in Dumézil, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-96.

[2] *op. cit.*, p. 210 ff.

sacrifice is naturally explained by his later introduction into the rites, and his magic powers justify his claims for a special share of the gifts. The sacrifice of *Puruṣa* is of much disputed origin, and the theory of Dumézil is most improbable.

Keith further points out that the effort to find a parallel development through which the Roman *Flâmen*, originally a victim substituted for the King, became the *flâmen sacrorum populi Romani*, is equally unsuccessful. So also the endeavour to find essential parallels between *Brahman* and *Flâmen*. There may be many similarities between the two, but there are also significant distinctions which point out divergence of ideas. A Brahman does not cease to be one, if his wife dies nor does his wife play any part similar to that of the wife of the Flâmen. The Flâmen must marry a virgin, a Brahman may marry a woman even if she has had ten non-Brahman spouses before (AV. V. 17. 8, 9). The Flâmen dialis may not spend a night outside the city; wherever a learned Brahman is, there is a city. Thus there is nothing whatever to prove the original identity of the *Brahman* and the *Flâmen*.

Keith's[1] own view is that the word *Brahman* denotes 'prayer and the mental attitude which induces prayer', and is perhaps cognate with Old Irish *bricht*, 'spell,' and Old Icelandic *bragr* 'poetic art.'

Till now we have dealt with the word *Brahman*, and now we take up the other word *Ātman*. It occurs altogether twenty-two times in the Ṛgveda; in the

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 206, 214 ff.; *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 450; for a reiteration of this view, see K. C. Chattopadhyaya's *Presidential Address to the Vedic Section of the IX All India Oriental Conference, Trivandrum* (1937); Hopkins also agrees with Keith (*Ethics of India*, p. 85).

nominative case, the word appears fifteen times; it is used seven times[1] in the sense of 'essence' (*svarūpabhūtaḥ*), twice (I. 162. 20; VII. 101. 6) in the sense of 'body' (*deha*), once (I. 164. 4) in the sense of the 'Intelligent Principle' (*cetana*), once (VII. 87. 2) to denote 'controller' (*dhārayitā*), twice (VIII. 3. 24; IX. 85. 3) in the sense of 'one-self' (*svayaṁ*), once (X. 16. 3) to denote 'breath' (*prāṇa*), and once (I. 73. 2) the 'blissful Soul'; in the objective case, the word occurs four times; twice (I. 163. 6; X. 97. 8) it denotes the 'body', once (X. 92. 13) the 'essence' (*sāra*), and once (X. 97. 4) to denote the 'self'; in the possessive case, the word *Ātman* occurs twice (X. 163. 5, 6) and on both occasions it signifies 'body'; in the locative case, it occurs once (IX. 113. 1) and denotes 'one-self'.

Besides these, the word occurs as part of compounds like *Ātmadāḥ*, *Ātmanvat*, and *S'atātmā*; in the first compound, it means 'Soul', 'himself'[2] or vital breath',[3] 'essence' or 'strength' in the second, and 'multiplicity' or 'years', or 'offspring' in the third.

The form *Tman* occurs seventy-three times in the Ṛgveda, and denotes 'one-self' (*svayaṁ*), 'one's grace' (*svīyānugraha-buddhiḥ*), 'alone,' or the 'Soul' (*Jīva*).

In the *Nirukta*, the word *Ātmā* occurs ten times and is always interpreted by Yāska to mean the 'Soul'.

As regards the meaning of *Ātman* according to European scholars, we find that some connect it etymologically with the German word *athmen* and derive it from the root *an*

[1] RV. I. 34. 7; 115. 1; IX. 2. 10; 6. 8; X. 97. 11; 107. 7; 168. 4.; cp. *supra*, pp. 5 ff.

[2] Mahīdhara on *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXV. 13.

[3] Griffith, *White Yajurveda*, p. 226.

'to breathe'[1]; Deussen[2] thinks that the word must have originally meant 'This I' (*Dieses Ich*) and derives it accordingly from two pronominal roots. Winternitz[3] relies upon usage of the word in Indian Literature and remarks that "it is often used as a reflexive pronoun, and as a substantive denotes one's own person in contrast to the outside world, sometimes the trunk in contrast to the limbs, but most frequently the 'Soul', the true 'Self', in contrast to the body". Max Müller[4] prefers to translate *Ātman* by 'Self', "that is the true essence of man, free, as yet, from all attributes." Roth and Böhtlingk,[5] and Grassmann[6] mention 'breath' (*Hauch*) as the first meaning of *Ātman.*

Summing up then the views advanced above by scholars, both Indian and European, we have the following meanings of the words *Brahman* and *Ātman*; the former in the masculine may mean the 'brahmin singer', or 'great', or 'prayer', or 'creator', or 'Bṛhaspati', or the 'Brahmā priest'; it is also used sometimes to denote any 'sacrificial priest' in general, or 'Aṅgirases or Maruts'; in the neuter, the word means 'prayer', or 'food' or 'great act', or 'brahmin', or 'cause of the Universe', or 'body', or 'great' or 'Rudra'. According to some European scholars who attempt to derive *Brahman* etymologically, it means also the 'latent electric power stirred up by such apparatus as sacred vessels, hymns, etc.', or 'fire', (internal in man or cosmic), or 'speech or word'. *Ātman* means 'essence', or 'body', or

[1] Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 249; Max Müller, *Gifford Lectures* (1892), p. 249.

[2] *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I. 1. 285.

[3] Winternitz, *loc. cit.*

[4] Max Müller, *Gifford Lectures* (1892), p. 249.

[5] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, p. 621.

[6] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 175; The same view is held by Keith (*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 451 ff.)

'intelligent principle', or 'controller', or 'one-self', or 'breath', or 'blissful', or 'strength', or 'multiplicity', or 'offspring', or 'years'; according to the majority of European scholars 'breath' is the first meaning of *Ātman.*

The real etymology of the words *Brahman* and *Ātman* is by itself of no importance in the present context. It has a significance only for those who attempt to trace the meaning of these terms backward from the Vedic period. So far as their meaning in the Ṛgveda is concerned, there is very little difference of opinion, and it is only this point that is relevant to our present purpose. The earlier history of the words is traced solely with the object of showing that the main thesis remains unaffected whether we accept one line of interpretation or the other.

It has now to be judged to what extent these meanings of *Brahman* and *Ātman* in the Ṛgveda represent the sense in which they were understood by the Upaniṣadic seers. We have already seen above that the Upaniṣads very frequently speak of *Brahman* being composed of 'knowledge' (*Cit*), and 'bliss' (*Ānanda*); the Ṛgvedic seers seem to be quite aware of these two attributes of *Brahman*; in one stanza (RV. I. 164. 4), the seer asks 'Who has seen the primeval (being), at the time of his being born? From earth are the breath and blood, but where is the Soul? Who may repair to the sage to ask this?':

को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानमस्थन्वन्तं यदनस्था बिभर्ति ।
भूम्या असुरसृगात्मा क्व स्वित्को विद्वांसमुप गात्प्रष्टुमेतत् ॥

In this verse *Ātman* is understood as the thinking or intelligent principle (*pañcabhūtātmakaśarīrasambaddhacetana*) which though connected with the gross and subtle form, is no where perceptible as a separate object. In RV. I. 73. 2d, the seer exhorts that Agni is to be cherished for, like Soul,

he is the source of happiness (*ātmeva s'evo didhiṣāyyo 'bhūt*). We have here the later Upaniṣadic idea that 'blissfulness' (*niratis'ayānandasvarūpatva*) is the nature of *Ātman.*

Similarly, the Upaniṣadic meaning of *Ātman* that it is the 'essence' of the body, that it is the 'controller', is already familiar to the Ṛgvedic seers for, as mentioned above,[1] *eight* times at least the word *Ātman* denotes in the Ṛgveda that which is the essence (*sārabhūtaḥ* or *svarūpabhūtaḥ*), and is used *once* (VII. 87. 2) to denote the 'controller' (*dhārayitā*). In this later verse, the seer addressing Varuṇa says *Ātmā te vātaḥ*, and Sāyaṇa interprets the line by saying that Wind (*Vāta*) as directed by Varuṇa is the controller (*Ātmā*) of all beings.

So far an attempt was made to point out that some Upaniṣadic conceptions of *Brahman* and *Ātman* are to be found even in the Ṛgveda. It also seems possible to see the survival of certain Ṛgvedic ideas about *Brahman* in the Upaniṣads themselves. Before making such and attempt, it is first necessary to understand that the Upaniṣads are nothing more than the proceedings of the different philosophical discussions held under different auspices in diverse debating halls in ancient India. We will then have to admit also that the Upaniṣads represent no single view about *Brahman* or *Ātman* but a set of views held by different thinkers of repute in those times.[2] It may be that in various discussions, the ablest debator was able to rule the day, but this should not make

[1] *Supra*, p. 44.

[2] Cf. R. E. Hume who says that "the Upaniṣads are no homogeneous products, cogently presenting a philosophic theory, but . . . are compilations from different sources recording the 'guesses at truth' of the early Indians. A single, well articulated system cannot be deduced from them." (*Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 9); for a lucid and interesting account of these thinkers and their theories, see B. M. Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, pp. 92 ff.

one imagine that his was the only view that was ever brought forward.

According to Hertel,[1] *Brahman* is etymologically related to the Latin word *flagro* and should mean 'fire'. If this etymology be acceptable and *Brahman* in the Ṛgveda can also mean 'fire', we can see a survival of this meaning when in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1), Bālāki Gārgya gives one of the alternative definitions of *Brahman* as the 'person in fire' (*Agnau puruṣaḥ*). Similarly, Max Müller's view[2] that *Brahman* should originally have meant in the RV. 'speech or word', corresponds to the view of Jitvan S'aivalini who, according to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV. 1), is reported to have told King Janaka of Videha that *Brahman* is *Vāk* though Yājñavalkya refutes this view later in the same tract of the Upaniṣad. Could these two instances be taken as evidence to show that though here and there a Yājñavalkya or an Ajātas'atru or an As'vapati may propound and establish an advanced view, there were people, even in Upaniṣadic times, whose views about *Brahman* and *Ātman* were not different from those prevailing in earlier ages?

Whether this proposition is acceptable or not,[3] it seems safe to conclude at least that the germs of the Upaniṣadic *Brahman* and *Ātman* are clearly found in times even so far back as the Ṛgvedic period, and that the attempts made by some scholars to prove that Upaniṣadic speculation is

[1] *Supra*, p. 27.

[2] *Supra*, p. 30.

[3] Cf. R. E. Hume (*op. cit.*, p. 14) who observes: "In the Ṛgveda, *brahma* seems to have meant first 'hymn', 'prayer', 'sacred knowledge', 'magic formula'. In this very sense it is used in the Upaniṣads eg., *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III. 10. 4, as well as in compounds such as *brahmavat*, 'possessed of magic formulas,' and *brahmavarcasā*, 'superiority in sacred Knowledge'."

purely of non-brahmanical origin [1] are mere vague guesses which are unsupported by any kind of internal evidence.

[1] cf. F. E. Pargiter (*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 59) who believes in the existence of two distinct traditions in ancient India; for a statement as well as complete refutation of this view held by scholars like Deussen, Garbe and Winternitz, a separate section has been devoted, supporters of this view usually cite instances of kings like *Ajātas'atru* and *As'vapati* who refuted the views advanced before them by several brahmin scholars. But, as an instance to support the contradictory proposition, the case of the great Upaniṣadic seer *Yājñavalkya*, whose views predominated most in the Upaniṣadic period, may be pointed out. The only safe conclusion in this respect seems to be that, while sacrificial rites etc., were restricted to men, and among them to brahmins only, philosophical disquisitions and deliberations were thrown open to others as well, to Kṣatriyas like King *Janaka* and *As'vapati*, to S'ūdras like *Raikva*, the carter, and to women like *Gārgī* and *Maitreyī*.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY IN THE VEDA

IN the previous section, we have considered the meaning of the terms *Brahman* and *Ātman* and their synonyms, and it has been shown that the Ṛgvedic Aryans recognised some entity in man different from the body and surviving death. Various attributes of this entity have been noticed in this connection. In the following section, it is proposed to consider the problem of the immortality of the Soul and its destiny after the destruction of the body.

Belief in personal immortality is not a doctrine of schools, but a conclusion of humanity. It is not based on the logic or metaphysics of any particular system, but is the utterance of a primary instinct common to the entire human race. The great religions of the world all of which accept this theory, have each its own form and solution for the problem. Nevertheless, the fact remains that every such theory has for its basis 'the crucial assumption of the disparateness between Matter and Energy'.[1]

In so far as the intimations of immortality in the Veda are concerned, it is the eschatological hymns of the Saṁhitās, particularly of the Ṛgveda, that seem to have the maximum

[1] Keyserling, *Immortality*, p. 22.

disclosures to make. A people who believe in penal retribution after death for man's deeds on Earth can afford to be consistent only when they accept that a portion of the individual is unaffected by the events of birth and death, and survives the body which is destroyed when he dies. Such is the case with the Ṛgvedic Aryans who, in consonance with their conception of Heaven where the virtuous revel with Yama, clearly accept the existence of the immortal portion of the individual which survives burial or cremation.

Fire or the grave is thus considered to destroy the body only, while the real personality of the dead man is indestructible. In one verse of the RV. (X. 16. 6), Agni is requested to temper the unborn portion (*Ajo bhāga*) of man with his flames, but not to consume it also. We have here an adumbration of the 'subtle body' (*Sūkṣmaśarīra*) of the Upaniṣads and of the later philosophical literature. This *immortal principle* of the individual is also called by such names as *Prāṇa*, *Ātman*, *Asu*, or *Manas*, and is believed often to be separable from the body even during unconsciousness. In one hymn (RV. X. 58), the Soul (*Manas*) of one who is lying apparently dead is besought to return to the body wherever it be wandering. As the seat of thought and emotion, *Manas* is also regarded as dwelling in the heart (*Hṛd*) [RV. VIII. 89. 5]. The usages of the words mentioned already, as also several other passages occurring in the Ṛgveda prove that these seers had a fairly advanced conception of the Soul. These poets knew already that the Soul is different from the body and survives its destruction, that it forms the essence of the body and is its controller, that it is the experiencer of the reward of man's actions, and that it is composed of the three qualities, *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*.[1]

[1] For a detailed account, see *supra*, p. 15 f.

There are some passages in the Ṛgveda where a clear reference is made to the Souls of deceased ancestors (*pitaraḥ*) who are conceived of as still existing in some other world. The seer once (RV. I. 36. 18) seeks to invite, through the agency of Agni, *Turvasa*, *Yadu* and *Ugradeva* from afar. The fathers are said to have adorned the sky with stars, as a bay horse is decorated with pearls (*kṛśanebhiḥ*)[1] Two paths are mentioned, one of the fathers and the other of the gods (RV. X. 88. 15). Soma, in concert with the fathers, is said to have extended the heaven and earth (RV. VIII. 48. 13). A prayer is offered to the early fathers, who know the realms, that they should not injure their descendants (RV. III. 55. 2).[2]

Two entire hymns (X. 15 and 54) are devoted in the Ṛgveda for the praise of these ancestors. Different races of them are mentioned like the *Kavyas*, *Ṛkvans*, *Aṅgirases*, *Navagvas*, *Vairūpas*, *Atharvans*, *Bhṛgus*, and *Vasiṣṭhas* (RV. X. 14. 3-6; 15. 8). Among these the *Aṅgirases* are particularly associated with Yama (RV. X. 14. 3, 5), though it is also said that all the fathers revel with him (RV. X. 14. 10; 135. 1). Distinction is also made among them as lower, higher and middle (RV. X. 15. 1), as earlier and later (RV. X. 15. 2). Some[3] become immortal and are deified while others[4] are denied this privilege. Some rejoice in the call *svāhā* in common with the gods, while others take delight in the call *svadhā* (RV. X. 14. 3). The descendants of these

[1] RV. X. 68. 11

[2] See also RV. VI. 52. 4; 75. 10, VII. 35. 12, IX. 83. 3, X. 107. 1.

[3] Chief among these are the *Ṛbhus* and the *Maruts*. This point is discussed elaborately in the later portions of this section.

[4] To this category belong the *Kavyas*, *Ṛkvans*, *Vasiṣṭhas* and other varieties of fathers who remain unnamed in the Veda. All these rejoice in *svadhā*; and though all these accompany the gods to sacrifices, the *Kavyas* seem to be the special followers of *Agni* (RV. X. 15. 9).

ancestors may not know them all, but Agni knows every one of them (RV. X. 15. 13). In general, these fathers lead the life of the gods themselves, for with them they feast (RV. VII. 76. 4) and with them are invited to partake of offerings given by their descendants on earth (RV. X. 14. 5). Thus propitiated by their children on earth, they are not ungrateful; having become immortal (AV. VI. 41. 3), they care faithfully for their mortal offspring in this world. Where men prepare the sacrifice and call them, thither they all go in thousands (RV. X. 15. 10, 11). full of gifts, 'with succour rich in blessing, with prosperity and blessing to the mortal adorer. They bring their sons might and wealth and prosperity; they hear, help, comfort; they fight boldly like heroes in battle and give a thousandfold reward for the offerings'.[1] The worshippers request these fathers not to injure them for any sin committed by them through human frailty (RV. X. 15. 6).

Certain cosmic actions are also attributed[2] to these fathers (*pitaraḥ*); they are thus said to have adorned the sky with stars and placed darkness in the night and light in the day (RV. X. 68. 11), and to have found the hidden light and generated the dawn (RV. VIII. 76. 4; X. 107. 1).

From what has been said till now it is clear that the Vedic poets believed in the survival of the *immortal principle* of man even after the destruction of his mortal body. The further destiny of this *immortal principle* remains now to be considered.

[1] RV. X. 15. 4, 5, 7.

[2] cf. the Iranian *Fravashis* who are said to aid Ahura-Mazda in ordering the heaven above, which, gleaming and beautiful, encloses in itself and round about that earth, which like a building stands raised, firmly founded, far-reaching, like polished metal in appearance, shining over the three parts of the earth. Through their action and might, the divinely created waters flow onward in their beautiful paths, the trees grow forth from the earth, and the wind blows; through their action and might, sun, moon and stars move on their paths, the heavens, the waters, the earth with its blessing, the whole world, remain established (cited by Kaegi, *Rigveda*, p. 166 n.)

These poets were uncompromising optimists who gloried in the life they lived on earth. They longed to live on earth as long as possible rather than to get out of it. 'May we live for a hundred autumns' is the oft-repeated boon that the Vedic seer desired from his propitious gods.[1] Whitney's[2] observations in this connection are noteworthy: "The earliest inhabitants of India were far enough removed from the unhealthy introversion of their descendants, from their contempt of all things beneath the sun, from their melancholy opinion of the vanity and misery of existence, from their longings to shuffle off the mortal coil forever, and from the metaphysical subtlety of their views respecting the universe and its creator. They looked at all these things with the simple apprehension, the näive faith, which usually characterises a primitive people. They had a hearty and healthy love of earthly life, and an outspoken relish for all that makes up for the ordinary pleasures of life. Wealth and numerous offspring were the constant burden of their prayers to their gods; success in predatory warfare, or in strife for consideration for power, was fervently besought. Length of days in the land, or death by no other cause than old age, was not less frequently supplicated; they clung to the existence of which they fully appreciated all the delights." Nor were they afraid to die for, after death, they went to a place which was not uncovetable. Their ancestors who went long back (RV. X. 14. 7) had prepared for them another place which was even more joyous. Yama, the son of Vivasvat, who was the first to know the path (*gātuṁ prathamo viveda*),[3] and hence

[1] See, for instance, RV. VII. 66. 16.

[2] *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 49 ff.

[3] RV. X. 14. 2; the *Atharvaveda* (XVIII. 3. 13) is more explicit in saying that Yama is the first mortal to die (*yo mamāra prathamo martyānāṁ*).

perhaps the ruler of the dead (RV. X. 16. 9), has found a dwelling in the highest heaven from which no power can displace them (RV. X. 14. 2). To this place which Yama has spied out as the path for many (*bahubhyaḥ panthām anupaspaśānam*) are admitted all the dead, for he is the assembler of people (*saṅgamanaṁ janānāṁ*).[1] The dead man obtains here a resting place (RV. X. 14. 9) when recognized by Yama as his own (AV. XVIII. 2. 37). When the dead body is either consigned to flames[2] or laid away to gentle rest in the bosom of Mother Earth,[3] the earth-born portion is given back, but the Soul of the pious man which belongs to the world above,[4] soars up towards a new life[5]:

सूर्यं चक्षुर्गच्छतु वातमात्मा द्यां च गच्छ पृथिवीं च धर्मणा ।
अपो वा गच्छ यदि तत्र ते हितमोषधीषु प्रति तिष्ठा शरीरैः ॥
अजो भागस्तपसा तं तपस्व तं ते शोचिस्तपतु तं ते अर्चिः ।
यास्ते शिवास्तन्वो जातवेदस्ताभिर्वहैनं सुकृतामु लोकम् ॥

[1] RV. X. 14. 1, cf. the *Avesta* which mentions *Yima* making a gathering (*hañjamanem*) of mortals (*Vendidad*, II. 21) [SBE., IV. 15.]; cf. Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, p. 377.

[2] RV. X. 16. 1.

[3] RV X 18. 10-13.

[4] cf. RV. X. 14. 8 where the Soul is asked to go back to its home (*punar astam ehi*) which seems to be a clear anticipation, of course without its sting, of Byron's lines .

"Methinks we have lived in some old world,
And this is Hell."

Compare also Wordsworth when he says

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting .
The Soul that rises with us, our Life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar."

[5] RV. X. 16. 3, 4.

Two verses[1] in Muir's metrical sketch of the Vedic idea of the future life express the same idea in a very beautiful way:

" Thine eye shall seek the solar orb,
Thy life-breath to the wind shall fly,
Thy part ethereal to the sky;
Thine earthly part shall earth absorb.

Thine unborn part shall Agni bright
With his benignest rays illume,
And guide it through the trackless gloom
To yonder sphere of life and light."

Before the deceased reaches the abode of Yama who sits engaged in an everlasting bout with the gods, the man has first to run past the two, four-eyed, brindled dogs whom he meets on the way (RV. X. 14. 10; 135. 1). Nor does he go without escort, for *Pūsan*, *Agni* and *Savitṛ* lead the dead on the far path to the fathers (RV. X. 17. 3-5). The dove (*kapota*) and the owl (*ulūka*) are also called the messengers of death (*nirṛti*, *mṛtyu*)[2]. Also, it is not right to expect that the Soul which casts off its dead body at the funeral, revels in Heaven after regaining its old earthly body or without any body at all. The mundane body discarded at death was useful only during the Soul's stay on earth, and its revival[3] is quite unnecessary. Nor is the alternative view tenable that no body is necessary for the Soul once it leaves the earth. In order to enjoy the luxuries available in Heaven, the Soul must have a body. Having destroyed its earthly body on the

[1] *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V. 328.

[2] RV. X. 165. 1, 4.

[3] Contrast Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 405, where he maintains that the old body is revived, though in a new form.

funeral-pyre, it must now have a new body, one as befits a resident in the abode of the gods. We are thus told that the moment the dead man enters the abode of Yama, he shakes off all imperfections and bodily frailties (RV. X. 14. 8; AV. VI. 120. 3). The limbs are no longer lame or crooked, and all sickness is cast off (AV. III. 28. 5). He has entered a 'land over-flowing with milk and honey' (AV. IV. 34. 6) where there is eternal light (RV. IX. 113. 7), where all people are equal and the weak are no longer subject to pay tribute to the strong (AV. III. 29. 3). Here, united with a glorious body (*tanvā suvarcāḥ*),[1] he passes a life of eternal enjoyment. In this heaven, the sound of the flute and of songs is heard (RV. X. 135. 7), and there seems to be abundant scope for sexual gratification also (AV. IV. 34. 2). The enjoyments at this state are said to be granted by Soma and are described thus :[2]

यत्र ज्योतिरजस्रं यस्मिँल्लोके स्वर्हितम् ।
तस्मिन्मां धेहि पवमानामृते लोके अक्षित . . . . ॥
यत्र राजा वैवस्वतो यत्रावरोधनं दिवः ।
यत्रामूर्यह्वतीरापस्तत्र माममृतं कृधि . . . . ॥
यत्रानुकामं चरणं त्रिनाके त्रिदिवे दिवः ।
लोका यत्र ज्योतिष्मन्तस्तत्र माममृतं कृधि . . . . ॥
यत्र कामा निकामाश्च यत्र ब्रध्नस्य विष्टपम् ।
स्वधा च यत्र तृप्तिश्च तत्र माममृतं कृधि . . . . ॥
यत्रानन्दाश्च मोदाश्च मुदः प्रमुद आसते ।
कामस्य यत्राप्ताः कामास्तत्र माममृतं कृधि . . . . ॥

[1] RV. X. 14. 8.
[2] RV. IX. 113. 7-11.

"Where glory never-fading is—where is the world of heavenly light,
The world of immortality—the everlasting—set me there!
Where Yama reigns, Vivasvat's son—where is the inmost sphere of heaven,
Where those abounding waters flow—O make me but immortal there!
Where there is freedom unrestrained—there in the triple vault of heaven,
Where worlds of brightest glory are—O make me but immortal there!
Where pleasures and enjoyments are—where raptures and abiding bliss,
Where all desires are satisfied—O make me but immortal there!
Where joys and delights are, where pleasures and gratifications,
Where objects of desire are attained—O make me but immortal there!"

So much for the usual destiny of the virtuous after death. All that is quite clear from this account is that some element in man survived death, an element which we can conveniently call the "Soul". We also know that these Souls have enjoyment in another world. But one is not sure of their ultimate destiny. Did they continue in their state of enjoyment eternally or was there a time-limit for their period of stay in their position conditioned by the nature of the virtuous deeds during their life-time? If there was a such a termination what happens to them? Do they come back to earth for a second term of life or do they continue a bare existence without any

attributes of existence like activities and enjoyments? Or do the Souls come to an end?

Again, if their enjoyment in Heaven is permanent, is there not any difference in this fruit conditioned by differences in the meritorious deeds during life? And does a Soul get only one chance to decide its permanent destiny? Again, for those who have not the meritorious deeds during their life to entitle them for enjoyment in Heaven, what is the destiny? Is it permanent Hell for the wicked, or a permanent existence of indifference for the rest who were neither virtuous nor wicked?

Another point on which there is uncertainty is in relation to the association of the Souls after death with a physical form. They have cast off their material body. Do they assume a new body or do the Souls exist in association with a finer body which survives the material body after death? There is no doubt about the fact that the Souls did not continue in an absolutely disembodied state. There is mention of the body associated with the Soul (RV. X. 14. 8) and there is also mention of physical acts like drinking (RV. X. 15. 5, 6). Therefore the Souls must have been associated with some kind of body which cannot be different in formation from the material body of the earthly life. Whether there was only what in later philosophy is termed *Sūkṣmas'arīra* or whether the *Sūkṣmas'arīra* gathered another gross body, perhaps not so materialistic as the earthly one and perhaps also adapted to the more spiritual life of the higher region, these are points on which adequate evidences are lacking. But the impression one gathers is that the Souls led a physical and concrete life. In this connection we must take note of the fact that the gods also are described as having a physical form,[1] and there is no

[1] This is clear in the description of *Indra*, *Maruts*, *Trita* and *Uṣas*.

reason to believe that the Souls enjoying in Heaven were conceived of in any other way.

In the case of those who are blessed with the exalted position in Heaven, what is it that differentiates them from gods? Is it only a difference in capacity to bless humanity like other gods? Various such philosophic problems arise when we study the condition of the Souls after death. The theory of transmigration very clearly propounded in the Upaniṣads and in post-Upaniṣadic literature offers a solution for some of these difficulties. This doctrine enables us to bring about an equation between a man's action and his experience consequent upon it. But there is no certain evidence for the acquaintance of the Vedic seers with this doctrine. The two passages *punar astam ehi*[1] (return to this home or literally translated, 'come again to this home', *i.e.*, this earth, and the refrain *tatra mām amṛtaṁ kṛdhi* in the end of RV. IX. 113 may be taken to indicate the non-permanence of the Soul's existence in Heaven. In the second passage, the question arises why, if the Soul were not to enjoy permanently in Heaven, the poet should so eagerly pray to be made permanent in that Heaven.[2] From the close resemblance which we notice between the Upaniṣadic and the Ṛgvedic doctrines regarding Brahman and Ātman, it may not be illegitimate to presume that the Ṛgvedic Aryans interested themselves in the rebirth of the Soul in a new body on this earth. The problem of the destiny of the Soul arises only in respect of those cases where the Souls just enter Heaven for continuation of the happy existence they enjoyed on earth. There is no such problem in cases where the Ṛgvedic notions are fairly

[1] RV. X. 14. 8.

[2] C. Kunhan Raja, *Cultural Heritage of India*, I. 30 ff.

clear, namely the instances of certain mortals [1] whose special merit is said to have brought them 'immortality' (*amṛtatva*) and who thereafter got respected as gods. The destination spoken of hitherto is meant [2] for ascetics (*tapasā ye anādhṛṣyāḥ*), soldiers (*ye yudhyante pradhaneṣu*), and philanthropists (*ye sahasradakṣiṇāḥ*); but those that demonstrated some feats proving their extraordinary skill were rightly honoured with a higher reward which was inaccessible to commonalty. If the former got after death, the privilege of enjoyment in company with Yama, their primeval ancestor, the latter then became *immortal* and enjoyed the company even of the high gods, a fact which is often hyperbolically expressed by saying that they became gods.

Notable among those that belong to this category are the *Ṛbhus*, the *Maruts*, the *Aṅgirases*, the *Virūpas*, the *Navagvas*, the *Atharvans*, the *Bhṛgus* and the *Kuśikas*. The *Ṛbhus* are of uncertain parentage. Too very frequently [3] they are called sons of Sudhanvan; but they are also known as sons of Indra (*Indrasya sūno*) [4] and children of Manu (*manor napātaḥ*).[5] Agni is once called their brother (RV. I. 161. 1).

Nor is there unanimity of opinion regarding their nature among scholars. Hillebrandt [6] sees in them the "three seasons" (*ṛtavaḥ*), and Weber [7] the genii of the past, present

[1] The view is also stated that even the gods are not *immortal* by nature, but this is a later achievement of theirs, either as a result of drinking *soma* (RV. IX. 106. 8) or of the bounty of *Savitṛ* (RV IV. 54. 2) or *Agni* (RV. VI. 7. 4)

[2] RV. X. 154. 2-5.

[3] RV. I. 161. 2, 7, 8, 110. 4; III. 60. 4; IV. 35. 1 and so on.

[4] RV. IV. 37. 4.

[5] RV. III. 60. 3, Sāyaṇa interprets this as sons of Aṅgiras (*manuṣyasyāṅgirasaḥ putrāḥ*).

[6] *Vedische Mythologie*, III. 135-54.

[7] *Vedische Beiträge*, cited by Keith, *op. cit.*, I. 178.

and future. Keith finds fault [1] with both these theories saying that the evidence adduced in each case forbids any certainty or even probability; but the same objection applies to the view maintained by him [2] as well as Macdonell [3] that these *Ṛbhus* might originally have been terrestrial or aerial elves who won their way to divinity. Bergaigne almost hits the mark when he says [4] that these should be three ancient sacrificers whose skill brought them immortality and whose number is in correspondence with the sacrificial fires. But there is enough evidence in the Vedas to show that the *Ṛbhus* were originally mortals, and that they attained their divinity and a share of the sacrifice through exhibition of their unusual skill.[5] The third or evening libation (*savana*) belongs to them as a reward for their merit.[6]

The feats performed by the *Ṛbhus* are numerous; but *five* seem to be specially conspicuous for their dexterity, and these are considered to have been responsible for their attainment to divinity. Each of these feats is enumerated in the following verse (RV. IV. 34. 9) in the most laconical way:

ये अश्विना ये पितरा य ऊती धेनुं ततक्षुर्ऋभवो ये अश्वा ।
ये अंसत्रा य ऋधग्रोदसी ये विभ्वो नरः स्वपत्यानि चक्रुः ॥

The verse seems to speak first of the fashioning of the Aśvins themselves by the *Ṛbhus*, but what is to be understood here is the car which was fashioned by the latter for

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 177 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[3] *Vedic Mythology*, p. 134.

[4] *La Religion Védique*, II. 412.

[5] RV. I. 20. 1, 8; 121. 6, 7.

[6] RV. I. 161. 8; IV. 33. 11; 34. 4; 35. 9; cf. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (III. 30. 2) which speaks of them as men who, by austerity (*tapas*), obtained a right to partake of *soma* along with the gods.

the use of the former, an event which has been celebrated very often elsewhere[1] in the Ṛgveda in most unambiguous terms. The uniqueness of the car consists in that it is able to traverse space horseless, reinless and with only three wheels (RV. IV. 36. 1). The 'fashioning of the parents' refers to the skill with which they rejuvenated their parents (RV. I. 20. 4 ; 111. 1 ; IV. 35. 5) who were frail and lay like decaying posts (RV. I. 110. 8 ; IV. 33. 2, 3) and who, after treatment by the *Ṛbhus* became young again (RV. I. 161. 3, 7) so that they could walk (RV. IV. 36. 3). The next feat of fashioning the milch-cow (*ūtī dhenuṁ tatakṣuḥ*) should be a cryptic reference to the story that these *Ṛbhus* formed out of hide (RV. I. 110. 8) or extracted from it (RV. I. 161. 7) a cow which yields nectar (RV. I. 20. 3) which is all stimulating and omniform (RV. IV. 33. 8). The cow seems to have been formed for the sake of Bṛhaspati, and the *Ṛbhus* are said to have also guarded her and formed her flesh (RV. IV. 33. 4). The story that the *Ṛbhus* reunited the mother with her calf may also be a variant recension of the above episode. For Indra, the *Ṛbhus* are reported to have fashioned two bay steeds (*harī*)[2] and this is the feat referred to by the phrase *ye aśvā* in the verse under consideration. The expression *ye aṁsatrā cakruḥ* is interpreted by Sāyaṇa to mean that the *Ṛbhus* manufactured armour for the use of the gods (*aṁsatrāṇi kavacāni devebhyaś cakruḥ*). The separation of Heaven and Earth is obviously another method of expressing the idea that the *Ṛbhus* established the two worlds.

Besides the feats recorded by the verse above, there is one more which is too very frequently mentioned, perhaps

[1] RV. I. 20. 3 ; 161. 6 ; X. 39. 12 and so on.

[2] The same thing may be meant when the *Ṛbhus* are represented as desiring to make a horse or as having made horse after horse (RV. I. 161. 3, 7).

with the idea that it is the greatest. This is the making of one cup, manufactured by Tvaṣṭṛ into four (RV. I. 20. 6; IV. 35. 2, 3; 36. 4 etc). The *Ṛbhus* are said to have performed the feat after having been commissioned to do so by the gods through Agni, their messenger, and the promised fee is receipt of worship on an equal footing with the gods (RV. I. 161. 1, 2). According to one version, Tvaṣṭṛ seems to have approved of this feat (RV. IV. 33. 5, 6), while another goes on to say that he got so enraged that he would fain slay these desecrators of the goblet of the gods (RV. I. 161. 4, 5). Among other minor feats of the *Ṛbhus* may be mentioned the accounts given of their having fashioned prayer (RV. X. 80. 7), sacrifices (RV. III. 54. 12) and of their being supporters of the sky (RV. X. 66. 10).

By these feats they acquired immortality[1] and became gods, alighting like eagles in Heaven (RV. IV. 35. 8). By their energy they mounted to Heaven (RV. I. 110. 6) and traversing by the path of immortality to the host of the gods (RV. IV. 35. 3), not merely obtained immortality among them but also gained their friendship,[2] so much so that they are often expressly invoked as gods (RV. IV. 36. 5; 37. 1).

As in the case of the *Ṛbhus*, the nature of the *Maruts* is also complex. Kuhn, Benfey,[3] Meyer,[4] Schroeder,[5] and Hillebrandt,[6] arguing on the doubtful basis of etymology, hold these *Maruts* to be no more than personifications of the Souls of the dead; but from the evidence available in the Veda

[1] RV. III. 60. 3; I. 110. 4.

[2] RV. IV. 33. 3, 4, 35. 3; 36. 4.

[3] *Orient und Occident* on RV. I. 6. 4, cited by Keith, *op. cit.*, I. 152, Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[4] *Indogermanische Mythen*, I. 218, cited by Keith, *loc. cit.*

[5] WZKM., IX. 248-9, cited by Macdonell, *loc. cit.*

[6] *Vedische Mythologie*, III. 317, cited by Keith, *loc. cit.*

it does not seem safe to conclude anything more than that they were originally priests who rose to divinity by merit. They are several times[1] called singers, and are said to have made the sun shine through their songs (RV. VIII. 29. 10). When in the company of Indra, they are addressed as priests (RV. V. 29. 3) and are compared with priests (RV. X. 78. 1). They are said to be the first to perform the sacrifice as *Daśagvas* (RV. II. 36. 2), and while the *Bhṛgus* only kindled Agni, they are said to have purified him in the house of the pious (RV. X. 122. 5). The merit acquired thus brought them divinity (RV. I. 85. 7) and enabled them to drink *soma*.[2]

The *Aṅgirases* seem to be the most important of the Vedic ancestors. Not only does their name occur over sixty times in the RV., but also one entire hymn (RV. X. 62) is specially devoted to their praise. They seem to derive their name from *Aṅgiras* who was their ancestor, for they are sometimes called sons of Aṅgiras (*aṅgirasaḥ sūnavaḥ*).[3] There is also the usual controversy regarding their nature. To Hillebrandt[4] their non-prominence in the "Family Books" is proof enough to conclude that they were originally outside Vedic tradition on entering which they carried with them their ancestors as semi-divine. Weber[5] positively declares them to be priests of the earlier Indo-Iranian period. Roth and Böhtlingk[6] understand them to be a race of higher beings

[1] RV. V. 52. 1; VII. 35. 9 etc.

[2] RV. II. 36. 2; VIII. 83. 9-12 etc.

[3] RV. X. 62. 5.

[4] *Op. cit.*, II. 159 ff.

[5] *Indische Studien*, I. 291 ff.

[6] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, I. 55; Cf. Bergaigne, *op. cit.*, II. 309; Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 127; Kaegi, *Rigveda*, p. 42 n.; Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

between gods and men, whose priestly character is a later development (*ein Geschlecht höherer Wesen das zwischen Göttern und Menschen steht*).

Their description in the Veda warrants at least the conclusion that they were originally priests who, by exhibition of special merit, were later deified. The seers most frequently call them 'fathers' (*pitaraḥ*),[1] 'our fathers' (*naḥ pitaraḥ*),[2] and 'our ancient fathers' (*naḥ pūrve pitaraḥ*).[3] On one occasion (RV. X. 14. 6), they are mentioned as fathers with *Atharvans* and *Bhṛgus*, and seem to be specially associated with Yama (RV. X. 14. 3-5). They are also once called *Brahman* priests (RV. VII. 42. 1). They found Agni hidden in the wood (RV. V. 11. 6) and thought of the first ordinance of sacrifice (RV. X. 67. 2). By virtue of their sacrifice, they obtained Indra's friendship as well as immortality (RV. X. 62. 1). Such seems to be their intimacy with Indra that the latter is twice (RV. I. 100. 4 ; 130. 3) called chief Aṅgiras (*aṅgirastama*).[4] After they attained immortality, *soma* was offered to them (RV. IX. 62. 9), and they were invoked even as gods (RV. III. 53. 7 ; X. 62).

Intimately connected with the *Aṅgirases* are the *Virūpāḥ*, the *Navagvāḥ* and the *Das'agvāḥ*. The name of the first group occurs nine times in the RV. Since, as an adjective, the word means 'one of variable form' and, as a noun, is always found along with the *Aṅgirases*, it is possible to infer that the *Virūpāḥ* may be only an attribute of the *Aṅgirases*, and, if this is not possible, at least a variety of them.[5]

[1] RV. X. 62. 2.

[2] RV. I. 71. 2.

[3] RV. I. 62. 2.

[4] *Soma* (RV. IX. 107. 6) and *Uṣas* (RV. VII. 75. 1 ; 79. 3) get the same appellation. *Agni* is once called the best of the oldest of the Aṅgirases (*Jyeṣṭham aṅgirasām*).

[5] cf. Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

The *Navagvas* are mentioned fourteen times in the RV., while the *Das'agvas* are mentioned only seven times. According to Sāyaṇa, these two words are the appellatives given to some groups of the *Aṅgirases*. In a contest for the acquisition [1] of Heaven between the *Ādityas* and the *Aṅgirases*, the latter seem to have won; a group of *Aṅgirases* completed the sacrifice in nine days and were thereafter called the *Navagvas*, while another group which completed the same in ten days was designated *Das'agvas*. (*Ādityānām aṅgirasāṁ ca svarga-gamanaṁ prati spardhamānānāṁ madhye pūrvam evāṅgiraso yāgān anuṣṭhāya svargaṁ prāptāḥ. . . . aṅgiraso dvividhāḥ satrayāgam anutiṣṭhanto ye navabhir māsais samāpya gatās te navagvāḥ . . . ye tu das'abhir māsais samāpya jagmus te das'agvāḥ*).[2] Bloomfield explains [3] the two names by saying that they denote the winners of nine and ten cows respectively. Macdonell takes [4] them to mean people moving in groups of nine and ten. Whatever be the etymological significance of the terms, it is clear that the *Navagvas* and the *Das'agvas* are only varieties of the *Aṅgirases*. This is clearly expressed by one verse (RV. X. 62. 6) which calls each of them 'chief Aṅgiras' (*aṅgirastama*). Like the *Aṅgirases*, the *Navagvas* are spoken of as 'our ancient fathers' (*naḥ pūrve pitaraḥ*),[5]

[1] This is only hinted at in RV. II. 34. 12, though not quite clearly; but in later literature this story is described quite elaborately. See *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 187 f.; II. 115-17; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VI. 34 f.; *Kauṣītakī Brāhmana*, XXX. 6; *Pañcaviṁs'a Brāhmaṇa*, XVI. 12. 1; *Baudhāyana S'rauta Sūtra*, XVIII. 22 ff.

[2] Sāyaṇa on RV. II. 34. 12 and I. 62. 4.

[3] *J. A. O. S.*, XVI., p. cxxxv; cf. Bergaigne, *op. cit.*, II. 145.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 144, based on Yāska's explanation of the term to mean *navagatayaḥ* (See *Nirukta*, XI. 19). Yāska takes the word also in the sense of *navanītagatayaḥ*. According to Durga (See commentary on *Nirukta*, XI. 19), *navagatayaḥ* means 'those of new gait', and *navanītagatayaḥ* 'those whose mind is on butter.'

[5] RV. VI. 22. 2.

and as 'our fathers' (*naḥ pitaraḥ*),[1] and like them help Indra in finding out the cows.[2]

Twice only does the name of the *Daśagvas* occur independently and they are usually associated with the *Navagvas* in their diverse activities.[3] They are the first to have offered sacrifice (RV. II. 34. 12) and are said to have assisted Indra in discovering the sun (RV. III. 39. 5). It must be out of gratitude for all this help of the *Daśagvas* that Indra is once (RV. VIII. 12. 2) reported to have rescued one of them, *Adhrigu* by name, from his enemies. As the name *Daśagva* occurs less frequently in the RV. than the name *Navagva*, it is sometimes[4] held that the former name is only a numerical variation of the latter, fashioned at a later stage; but the fact that their distinctive feat of discovering the sun is attributed to the *Aṅgirases* in one verse (RV. VIII. 29. 10) shows that the *Daśagvas* must be a recognized group among the *Aṅgirases*.

Fourteen are the occurrences of the name *Atharvan* in the Ṛgveda, eleven times in the singular and only three times in the plural. The word occurs more than twenty times in the AV also. The *Atharvans* generally appear in the character of priests. That they are only a variety of the *piṭaraḥ* is clear from the fact that they are enumerated as such along with the *Aṅgirases*, the *Navagvas*, and the *Bhṛgus* (RV. X. 14. 6). They are said to have established the order of sacrifices (RV. X. 92. 10), to have thence produced the sun (RV. I. 83. 5) and to have brought a cup of *soma* to Indra (AV. XVIII. 3. 54); and the merit acquired by the performance of these

[1] RV. X. 14. 6.

[2] RV. I. 62. 3, 4; V. 29. 12; 45. 7; III. 39. 5; X. 108. 8.

[3] See, for instance, RV. V. 29. 12 where, along with the *Navagvas*, they assist Indra in detecting the cows.

[4] Macdonell, *loc. cit.*

deeds is obviously responsible for their being able to dwell in Heaven, to be companions of the gods, to be related to them, nay to be called gods even (AV. IV. 1. 7; XI. 6. 13).

Along with the *Atharvans*, the *Bhṛgus* are also mentioned among the fathers (RV. X. 14. 6). Their name occurs twenty-three times in the RV. While the skill of the *Atharvans* consists in having established rites with sacrifices, the *Bhṛgus* established Agni like a friend well-deposited in wood (RV. VI. 15. 2) or as a treasure among men (RV. I. 58. 6). Agni is even called the gift of the *Bhṛgus* (RV. III. 2. 4). By the demonstration of such skill, they are said to have shown themselves as gods (RV. X. 92. 10).

The name of the *Kuśikas* occurs nine times in the RV., *once* only in the singular and for the remaining times in the plural. The contexts in which their name occurs in the Veda make it clear that they are priests like the *Atharvans* or the *Bhṛgus*. They chant hymns in praise of Agni (RV. III. 26) and the Rivers (RV. III. 33. 5), and, with the aspiration to reach heaven, they are said to have prepared a hymn (*vāhaḥ akran*) in praise of Indra (RV. III. 30. 20).

So far those that obtained immortality by their merit were enumerated. Immortality is often spoken of as a gift of the gods for those worshippers who propitiate them. *Agni*[1] and *Soma*[2] render mortals immortal (*amṛtāḥ*). The *Maruts* are besought to make their worshippers immortal (RV. V. 55. 4), and one of the gifts sought by the devotees of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* is immortality (RV. V. 63. 2). The exhilarating and invigorating effect of the soma-drink has often called forth some of the latent powers of poetic imagination of the Vedic bards. *Soma* is called by them the immortal stimulant

[1] RV. I. 31. 7.
[2] RV. I. 91. 1; VIII. 48. 3.

(*amartyaṁ madam*),[1] which the gods love (RV. IX. 85. 2) and of which, when pressed by men and mixed with milk, all the gods drink (RV. IX. 109. 15). The soma-juice is immortal (*amartyaḥ*),[2] and the gods became immortal after drinking it (RV. IX. 106. 8). In fact so much is the estimation of this soma-juice that it is often[3] called *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality.

Time and again, we also hear in the RV. of certain seers desiring to reach the highest station of *Viṣṇu* and experience the delights available there (RV. I. 154. 5, 6).

So far those eligible for immortality were enumerated. What actually the Vedic seers understood by *immortality* will have to be considered hereafter. It is an obvious fact that the word most used to convey this meaning is *amṛta*. This word occurs slightly over two hundred and twenty times in the Ṛgveda in its numerous declensional variations. In the majority of cases, the word is taken by Sāyaṇa to mean 'that which is not mortal' (*amaraṇaśīla*, *maraṇadharmarahita*, *maraṇarahita*). The other senses in which it is understood by him are 'god' (*deva*), 'liberation' (*mokṣa*, *sāyujya*), continuity of the race (*santatyaviccheda*), heaven (*svarga*), the soma-drink called also divine drink (*devapāna*), nectar (*pīyūṣa*, *payas*) or herbal juice (*sudhā*), water (*udaka*), food (*anna*), ghee (*ghṛta*), oblation (*havis*), sun (*sūrya*), fruit of deeds (*karmaphala*), freedom from fatigue (*ālasyarāhitya*), imperishability, eternality (*avināśitva*, *nityatva*). Roth and Böhtlingk[4] give the following meanings

[1] RV. I. 84. 4.

[2] RV. IX. 3. 1.

[3] RV. VIII. 44. 16, 23 ; G. Dumézil in his *Le Festin d' Immortalite* holds that the myth narrating the winning of the drink of immortality is Indo-European. Geldner (*Festgruss an Roth*, p. 192) maintains that in *two* hymns of the RV. (I. 163 ; V. 2. 3) there is a clear reference to this story. For a refutation of these views, see Keith, *op. cit.*, II. 623 ff.

[4] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, I. 378 f.

to the word (i) *nicht gestorben* (not dead); *unsterblich* (immortal); *ein unsterbliches, gottähnliches Wesen* (an immortal, godlike existence); *unvergänglich* (imperishable). (ii) *ein berauschendes Getränk* (an intoxicating drink). (iii) *das Unsterbliche, die Gesammtheit der Unsterblichen* (the immortal, the whole group of immortals). Grassmann,[1] Benfey,[2] and Geldner [3] give almost the same meanings.

From the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that the state of immortality was, for the Vedic Indian, no more than a continued existence after death in the company of the gods, enjoying in full all their privileges.[4] It was a sort of apotheosis which meant to the individual a transfer of existence from earth to higher realms, and a transformation from mortality to divinity. In this state, he exercised influence over those whom he left behind, receiving worship from them godlike and conferring benefits on the devoted among them in a similar capacity. This is what is meant when the *Ṛbhus* and others of their category are often said to have become gods by their skilful deeds (*devāso abhavatā sukṛtyā*).[5] The idea also occurs that immortality is attained if the line of succession is unbroken (RV. V. 4. 10; VIII. 31. 9), but such cases are few and far between; and, if *soma*,[6] ghee, or oblation was called *amṛta*, it is because the offering of these in sacrifices was responsible for attainment of the state of divinity.

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Rgveda*, p. 94 f.

[2] *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 45.

[3] *Der Rigveda in Auswahl* (*Glossar*), p. 14.

[4] cf. Geldner (*Ibid.*) who takes immortality (*amṛtatva*) to mean either immortality (*unsterblichkeit*) or godliness (*Göttlichkeit*).

[5] RV. IV. 35. 8; cf. also RV. III. 60. 3; IV. 33. 4; 36. 4 and so on.

[6] Drinking of *soma* is sometimes said to bring immortality. (RV. VIII 48. 3). The reference in such cases must be to the invigorating effect of the juice which incites and assists further sustained activity; cf. RV. I. 62. 10 where the word *amṛtāḥ* is rendered by Sāyaṇa to mean *ālasyarahitāḥ*.

As regards the destination of these immortals, there are also some indications in the Ṛgveda. Man is said to become immortal by the solar ray (*upāṁśunā sam amṛtatvam ānaṭ*).[1] In another context, *Sūryā* is asked to ascend the chariot which is bound for the world of immortals (RV. X. 85. 20). Passages like these show that immortality has some special connection with the solar phenomena; but the belief also seems to exist that it is in the solar world that the immortals take up their residence. All immortals are thus said to hang on *Savitṛ* as on the axle-end of a chariot (RV. I. 35. 6). *Viṣṇu,* a solar divinity, keeps the loftiest station, upholding dear immortal places (RV. III. 55. 10), and the wise seers always look forward with fond hopes to reach these dear abodes (*tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrāyaḥ*).[2]

CHAPTER IV

THE VEDIC DOCTRINE OF THE WORLDS ABOVE

IN the previous chapter, an attempt was made to elucidate the destiny of the soul after death, and it has been shown that the souls of the virtuous people pass over to the region of Heaven, and there continue the same enjoyment which they had on earth in a more idealised form. This necessarily leads on to a consideration of the different worlds beyond this earth to which the virtuous souls ascend after death, and in which the gods move.

Of the heavenly world of Yama to which repair the virtuous souls, according to the Vedic poets, after their death, there is a clear mention made in the funeral hymns of the Saṁhitās; but a study of the cosmological speculations of these people reveals that a belief in a plurality of heavens was also current among them. It was usual in this period to divide the Universe into Earth, Air or Atmosphere, and Heaven. Each of these spheres was called by several names in accordance with the angle with which it was viewed by the poet. Thus, when he thought of the Earth as a 'broad place', he called it *urvī* or *pṛthivī*, *apārā* when he conceived it as 'boundless', and *bhūmiḥ* when as the 'place from which all things spring'. Earth is also very often denominated the

'great' (*mahī*), the 'extended' (*uttāna*), or simply 'this' (*idam*), contrasted with the upper sphere which is distant. Heaven is likewise designated the 'shining light' (*div, rocanā, rocanaṁ divaḥ*), the 'woven web of light' (*vyoman*),[1] the 'height' (*sānu, pṛṣṭha, viṣṭap*), the 'place situated afar' (*parāvat*), the 'roof of the world supported on high'[2] and the 'firmament above the sky' (*divo nāka*) in which the stars are fixed'. It is Hertel's[3] claim that, in India as well as in Iran, heaven was conceived 'as a great stone building, filled with light, through whose doors, the sun and the stars, the light of heaven shines upon men'. In the course of an elaborate examination of this view, Keith[4] points out that the evidence called in in support of the contention is not accurate. The Vedic Seer often thought of Heaven and Earth together, and the couple was then denominated by such terms as *dyāvāpṛthivī, rodasī*, and *kṣoṇī*. *Rajas* is the name by which the atmospheric region was commonly known.

Many of these terms are also used in the generic sense of world. The term *Rajas* is often used[5] as a general name for all the three spheres. On such occasions, heaven is called *tṛtīya*

[1] cf. RV. III. 54. 9 where the gods are described as standing on the spacious far-extended path-way (*urau pathi vyute*) and singing praises.

[2] X. 149. 1; IV. 56. 3.; II. 15. 2; VI. 47. 4; though a definite expression conveying this meaning is not found in these passages, they prove in plain terms that heaven was conceived by the Vedic bard as the *roof* of the world supported on high without beams (*avaṁśa, askambhana*).

[3] *Die Himmelstore im Veda und im Avesta*, cited by Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 621.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 621 f.

[5] The term *pṛthivī* also finds a similar use, and in such contexts (RV. I. 108. 9, 10), the atmospheric region is called middle (*madhyama*) and heaven by the name highest (*parama*), while earth is called lowest (*avama*). Zimmer (*Altindisches Leben*, p. 357) thinks it necessary to accept the existence of a *rajas* beneath the earth to account for the course at night, but Wallis (*Cosmology of the Rigveda*, p. 115 f.) rightly points out that, in the Vedic passages containing the word *rajas*, the reference is always to a region situated above the earth.

(RV. IX. 74. 6 ; X. 45. 3 ; 123. 8), *uttama* (RV. IX. 22. 5), or *parama* (RV. III. 30. 2) as contrasted with the earth which is then called *upara* (RV. I. 62. 5) or *pārthiva* (RV. I. 154. 1 ; IV. 53. 3). The different spheres are all mentioned together as the three earths, the three heavens and the three atmospheres, and the matter is made all the more complex when occasionally addition is made in the singular of one member of the trio, when the three have already been mentioned.[1] What is more, the dual division of heaven and earth is sometimes combined with the threefold division, and *six* regions are thus enumerated (*ṣaḷimā rajāṁsi*).[2] Such manipulations of numbers might have originally been mere freaks of language,[3] but, as we shall presently see, they later resulted in an actual subdivision of each of these regions.

The vault (*nāka*)[4] is often added after the triad (RV. I. 34. 8), and a region higher than the usual three is thus posited ; but a verse in the Atharvaveda (IV. 14. 3) seems to speak of a still higher region when it mentions this sphere before the realm of celestial light (*svar*, *jyotis*). In one verse of the Ṛgveda (IX. 96. 19), Soma is said to enter the atmospheric region, and then travel further to the fourth sphere (*turīyaṁ dhāma*) :

चमूषच्छ्येनः शकुनो विभृत्वा गोविन्दुर्द्रप्स आयुधानि बिभ्रत् ।
अपामूर्मिं सचमानः समुद्रं तुरीयं धाम महिषो विवक्ति ॥

[1] For instance, RV. VII. 33. 7 ; cf. Wallis, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[2] RV. I. 164. 6 ; cf. RV. VII. 87. 5 where *three* heavens (*tisraḥ dyāvaḥ*) and three earths (*tisraḥ bhūmīḥ*) are mentioned together.

[3] Wallis, *loc. cit.*

[4] Words like *sānu* (I. 54. 4), *viṣṭap* (I. 46. 3), *pṛṣṭha* (I. 115. 3), *nākasya pṛṣṭha* (I. 125. 5), *divaspṛṣṭha* (III. 2. 12), *nākasya sānu* (VIII. 103. 12), *tṛtīye pṛṣṭhe* (IX. 86. 27) which occur frequently in the Ṛgveda denote the same region.

According to Sāyaṇa, this 'fourth sphere' is the realm of the Moon[1] which is situated above the solar region (*sa somaḥ turīyaṁ caturthaṁ dhāma cāndramasaṁ sthānaṁ vivakti sevate ; sūryalokasyopari cāndramaso loko vidyate*).

Quite frequently three worlds are marked as distinct from the usual three regions, by such expressions as *tisro divaḥ*, *trīṇi rocanā*, and *trīn dyūn* ; *tisro divaḥ* are distinguished from *tisraḥ pṛthivīḥ*, and *trīṇi rocanā* and *trīn dyūn* from *tisro bhūmīḥ* :[2]

त्रिरन्तरिक्षं सविता महित्वना त्री रजांसि परिभूस्त्रीणि रोचना ।
तिस्रो दिवः पृथिवीस्तिस्र इन्वति त्रिभिर्व्रतैरभि नो रक्षति त्मना ॥
त्री रोचना वरुण त्रीँरुत द्यून्त्रीणि मित्र धारयथो रजांसि ।
वावृधानावमतिं क्षत्रियस्यानु व्रतं रक्षमाणावजुर्यम् ॥
तिस्रो द्यावो निहिता अन्तरस्मिन्तिस्रो भूमीरुपराः षड्विधानाः ।
गृत्सो राजा वरुणश्चक्र एतं दिवि प्रेङ्खं हिरण्ययं शुभे कम् ॥
त्रिविष्टिधातु प्रतिमानमोजसस्तिस्रो भूमीर्नृपते त्रीणि रोचना ।
अतीदं विश्वं भुवनं ववक्षिथाशत्रुरिन्द्र जनुषा सनादसि ॥
तिस्रो भूमीर्धारयन्त्रीँरुत द्यून्त्रीणि व्रता विदथे अन्तरेषाम् ।
ऋतेनादित्या महि वो महित्वं तदर्यमन्वरुण मित्र चारु ॥

Varuṇa's rays are once (RV. VIII. 41. 9) described to pervade not only the three earths (*tisraḥ bhūmīḥ*), but to go beyond as well and fill up the three superior realms of heaven (*trir uttarāṇi papratuḥ*).

[1] Geldner (*Der Rigveda in Auswahl*, II. 143) reiterates this view, and so does Ludwig (*Der Rigveda*, V. 388), though in a hesitant fashion Oldenberg does not explain the phrase *turīyaṁ dhāma*.

[2] RV. IV 53. 5; V 69 1 ; VII 87 5; I 102 8, II. 27. 8.

The Ṛgveda also mentions 'three shining worlds' (*trīṇi rocanā*) and 'three distant heavens' (*tisraḥ parāvataḥ divaḥ*) which, from the special attributes used in describing them, mean something other than the usual triad of Earth, Air and Heaven:[1]

Besides these passages, it is also possible to find in the Saṁhitās distinct references to a three-fold division of the heavenly region (*divaḥ*); the highest heaven is called *uttama*,[2] the middle goes by the name of *madhyama*[3] or *uttara*,[4] and the lowest is called either *avama*[5] or *pārya*.[6] The AV., (XVIII. 2. 48) which divides heaven into *avamā*, *madhyamā* and *tṛtīyā*, says that the first is rich in water (*udanvatī*), the second in stars[7] (*pīlumatī*), and the third (*pradyauḥ*) is the place where the fathers sit (*yasyāṁ pitara āsate*).

But a verse of the Ṛgveda (I. 35. 6) dedicated to *Savitṛ* has a varied account to give of these *three* heavens:

ति॒स्रो द्याव॑ः सवि॒तुर्द्वा उ॒पस्था॑ँ एका॑ य॒मस्य॒ भुव॑ने विरा॒षाट् ।
आ॒णिं न रथ्य॑म॒मृताधि॑ तस्थुरि॒ह ब्र॑वीतु य उ॒ तच्चिके॑तत् ॥

[1] RV. V 81 4; VIII. 5. 8

[2] RV. V 60, 6

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] RV. IV. 26. 6.

[5] RV. V. 60. 6.

[6] RV. VI. 40. 5; the AV. (V. 4. 3) seems to call this *tṛtīya*; cf. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, I. 361n.

[7] The translation here is based on Sāyaṇa's commentary which explains the word thus: *pālayanti'ti pīlavaḥ, grahanakṣatrādayaḥ*; *te yasyāṁ santīti pīlumatī.* Griffith understands the word to mean 'blossoming with the *pīlu* tree' (*Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, II. 233n.). Macdonell and Keith (*op. cit.*, p. 361) prefer to leave the word untranslated; Whitney calls the commentator's meaning noted above 'a worthless etymological guess', but still finds it necessary to incorporate the meaning in his translation of the entire verse. He also mentions that one of his MSS. reads *pītumatī* which though obviously wrong, could be emended as *pitumatī* (rich in food) [*Atharvaveda Samhitā*, Translated by W. D. Whitney, pp. 842 ff.]. Roth and Böhtlingk (*Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, IV. 748) leave the word untranslated, but say that it denotes the middle sky (*der mittlere Himmel*).

We read here that, of the three heavens, two belong to *Savitṛ* and one to *Yama*, and that all immortal things rest on Savitṛ as on the axle-end of a car. Mādhava[1] and Sāyaṇa[2] interpret the three worlds mentioned here to mean the group of Earth, Air and Heaven, and hold that the first and last belong to *Savitṛ*, and that the second region belongs to *Yama.* Venkaṭamādhava[3] understands the 'three worlds' here to mean the 'three heavens' which stand supported by Agni and Savitṛ, and that all immortals are supported by the latter, for he grants immortality. Skandasvāmin[4] mentions both these meanings as alternatives. Macdonell[5] says that, of the three worlds, Savitṛ occupies Air and Earth, and that the third world which is the highest heaven, is the abode of Yama in which dwell the *pitaraḥ* (men after death). All these explanations proceed from a quaint understanding of the passage and are in the highest degree fanciful. Seeing that the term *dyauḥ* is used most frequently in the Veda to denote a region distinct from the usual trio, it is unnecessary to take the word *dyāvaḥ* in this verse in the generic sense of 'a region'. What is to be understood here[6] is the existence of "three heavens" besides Earth and Atmosphere, *two* of which belong to *Savitṛ* and are the station of immortals, while the third which is the abode of *Yama*, serves as the residence of ordinary mortals who after death become the Manes. Also, the heavens belonging to

[1] *Ṛgvedavyākhyā Mādhavakṛtā*, Ed. by C. Kunhan Raja, p. 270.

[2] cf. Geldner (*Der Rigveda*, I. 38n.) who understands this earth and the visible and invisible portions of the sky by the three heavens mentioned here (*Die drei Himmel sind hier Erde, der sichtbare und der jenseitige, unsichtbare Himmel*).

[3] C. Kunhan Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

[4] *Ṛgvedabhāṣya*, Edited by C. Kunhan Raja, p. 133.

[5] *Vedic Reader*, p. 16.

[6] cf. J. Ehni, *Der Vedische Mythus des Yama*, p. 115.

Savitṛ should be accepted to be situated on a higher plane than the one of which Yama is the lord. When Macdonell said that the world of Yama is the highest, and that the *two* worlds of Savitṛ are situated at a lower level, he was perhaps influenced by the Atharvavedic verse (XVIII. 2. 48) noticed already; but this conception is entirely opposed to Ṛgvedic tradition.[1]

For a ratification of these observations as well as for obtaining a full knowledge of the distinctive features of the *three* heavens, it is necessary to make a careful study of the eschatological conceptions in the Saṁhitā period.

Mundane pleasure had all its charms for the Vedic poet,[2] and death had no terrors for him. He believed, as did Socrates long after, that it is not death but dying that is terrible. To the pessimistic Socrates death was attractive because it marked the cessation of mundane misery;[3] but the optimistic Vedic Indian did not fight shy of death for a different reason. Death held out to him a prospect of greater happiness. It brought out not a cessation of his existence, but a prolongation of his old life lived under better conditions. The abode of Yama which the virtuous man reached after death is no strange place. It is his own home, discovered for him by his ancestors and ruled by one of them (RV. X. 14. 1, 2; 16. 9). He was not severed from intercourse with those whom he left behind on earth,[4] for he was, in a measure, dependant on the offerings of his descendants. Nor

[1] That there is frequently a difference between the traditions of the RV. and the AV. is a well-known fact. For some instances, see *infra*.

[2] For details, see *supra*, pp. 54 ff.

[3] cf. the Poet-Philosopher Heine who wrote:

> "Süss ist der Schlaf, der Tod ist besser,
> Am Besten wär' es, nie geboren sein."

[4] In several of the passages of the AV. (XII. 3. 17; VI. 120. 3; IX. 5. 27) an expectation is expressed that there will be a continuation of family relations maintained even in the next world (Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V. 305 f).

did he suffer for want of those pleasures which were available to him on earth. He had all these in a greater measure, so much so that it is possible to call the Vedic Heaven 'a glorified world of material joys'.[1] The Heaven in which the dead man thus passes a life of enjoyment may be identified with the *Lunar World* of later times. The idea that the Manes live here seems to be quite familiar to these Vedic Seers, though it is still in its beginnings and not yet fully developed as in the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Soma is described to be in very close connection with the Manes. He is said to be united with them (RV. VIII. 48. 13) or accompanied by them (AV. XVIII. 4. 12). Soma stimulated the fathers to deeds (RV. IX. 96. 11), and through his help they found the light and the cows (RV. IX. 97. 39). The fact is no doubt true that Soma is a regular name of the Moon only in Post-Vedic Literature, and that in the Veda it generally signifies the plant or more frequently the juice; but it has to be conceded that there are certain passages[2] in the Ṛgveda which would give an absurd meaning if the word *Soma* occurring in them is taken in either of these latter senses. Chief among such are those (RV. X. 85) which describe the wedding of Soma with Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun. Soma is here described as placed in the lap of the stars (*nakṣatrāṇām eṣām upasthe soma āhitaḥ*).[3] It is also stated here (RV. X. 85. 3) that albeit the fancy of the drinker of the juice of the Soma-plant that he has drunk *soma*, no one really tastes of him whom the priests know to

[1] Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 168.

[2] It must be of interest to note in this context that Hillebrandt contends that, in the whole of the *ninth* Maṇdala, *Soma* is the Moon, and no where the ordinary plant. (*Vedische Mythologie*, p. 309, 326).

[3] RV. X. 85. 2.

be Soma (*Somaṁ yaṁ brahmāṇo vidur na tasyāśnāti kaś cana*). Besides these passages where *soma* cannot mean the juice or the plant, there are some which speak of the connection of the daughter of the Sun with Soma; the former is thus said to purify the distilled *soma* (RV. IX. 1. 6) and to have brought it after it had been expanded by rain (RV. IX. 113. 3). The connection between Sūryā and Soma mentioned in these passages becomes clear only if *Soma* is here understood to mean the *Moon* who, as a luminary even like the Sun, can reasonably be regarded as his son-in-law. Yet another passage (RV. X. 123. 8) describes *Soma* as the drop (*drapsa*) which goes to the Ocean, looking with the eye of a vulture; and here also the allusion must be only to the Moon. The Atharvaveda which is generally reputed for conceptions more advanced than the Ṛgveda, holds its own even on the present occasion. It declares in clear terms the identity of *Soma* with the *Moon* when it says (AV. XI. 6. 7) " May the god Soma free me, he whom they call the Moon " (*somo mā devo muñcatu yam āhuś candramā iti*). It is thus clear that Soma meant also the Moon to the Vedic Seers, and that these people believed in a close association of Soma with the Manes.

The Manes are not all of the same kind. There are distinctions made among them (RV. X. 15. 1) into those that are lower (*avara*), those that are higher (*para*), and those that are middle (*madhyama*) ; of these, it is only those that belong to the last variety who are expressly spoken of as soma-loving (*madhyamāḥ pitaraḥ somyāsaḥ*), and it can hence be inferred that it is these alone that are intimately connected with the Moon. The lower (*avara*) variety of the Manes might be composed of the ordinary virtuous dead who go to Yama's Heaven to revel in his company. Soma is intimately

6

connected even with Yama.[1] The latter, we are told, sits under a tree in Heaven and drinks *soma* in the company of the gods (RV. X. 135. 1). Varuṇa who is the companion of Yama in his merriment in this world, is often identified with Soma (RV. IX. 77. 5 ; 95. 4), so that the dead man who is promised that he would meet the two kings, Yama and Varuṇa, (RV. X. 14. 7) can be considered to meet *Soma* also. If so, we have here the beginnings of the Upaniṣadic theory that people of ordinary merit like sacrificers and philanthropists, reach the *Lunar World* after their death. The theory that these people enjoy there might also have been suggested by the Vedic belief that the dead man finds Yama in his Heaven engaged in an ever-lasting bout with the gods, and that he is also welcome to the party.[2]

But the higher class (*para*) of Manes were justly honoured with a higher award. To this class belong the *Ṛbhus*, the *Maruts*, the *Aṅgirases*, the *Virūpas*, the *Navagvas*, the *Daśagvas*, the *Atharvans*, the *Bhṛgus*, and the *Kuśikas*. All these are people who distinguished themselves by exhibition of special merit, and as a reward they became immortal and were treated even like gods. Not only do we hear often that the Manes are in close relation with the Sun, but also immortality is found in the Veda to have a sort of special connection with the Solar gods. Thus on the far path to the world of the Manes, *Pūṣan* is the protector and *Savitṛ* the usherer of the dead (*pūṣā tvā pātu prapathe purastāt . . . tatra tvā devaḥ savitā dadhātu*).[3] The Manes are united with or guard the Sun (RV. X. 107. 2 ; 154. 5) or are connected

[1] cf. Hillebrandt (*op. cit.*, I. 394 ff.) according to whom Yama is the Moon, in which dying is typical, and thus the mortal child of the Sun and closely connected with the Manes.

[2] For an elaboration of this theme, see *supra*, pp. 61 ff.

[3] RV. X. 17. 4.

with the rays of the Sun (RV. I. 109. 7) [1], and Suns shine for them in Heaven (RV. I. 125. 6). In another passage (RV. IX. 113. 9) we are even told clearly that the abode of the fathers is the highest point of the Sun (*lokā yatra jyotiṣmantaḥ tatra mām amṛtam kṛdhi*). Varuṇa is the wise guardian of immortality (*dhīram amṛtasya gopām*),[2] and on Savitṛ all immortal things rest as on the axle-end of a car (RV. I. 35. 6). Sūryā is in one passage (RV. X. 85. 20) asked to ascend the chariot bound for the world of immortals, and, in another context, it is clearly stated that man becomes immortal by the solar ray (*upāṁśunā sam amṛtatvam ānaṭ*).[3] As in the case of the close relation of Soma with the Manes which might be the beginning of the identification of the *pitṛloka* with the Moon, the intimate relation of immortality with the Sun may be the starting point for the later doctrine of Immortality being identified with dissolution in the Sun.

From this world which is the abode of immortals like the *Ṛbhus*, must be distinguished the abode of *Viṣṇu*, another solar god [4] in the Vedic pantheon. This is a god whose status in the Ṛgveda is much debated. The general view [5] has been that Viṣṇu presents the unique spectacle of a god who, from a very inferior position in the Vedic period, rises later in the Purāṇic period, to the dignity of the Supreme

[1] cf. Bloomfield, *J. A. O. S.*, XVI. 27.

[2] RV. VIII. 42. 2.

[3] RV. IV. 58. 1.

[4] Oldenberg's view that *Viṣṇu* is only a space-god (*weltall durchschreitende Gött*) is untenable, for the idea that he is the solar home of souls is too clearly connected with him to be brushed aside as of no account (cf. Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, XVI, cxlvii ff.).

[5] Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 227; Muir, *op. cit.*, IV. 98; Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 164; Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, p. 33 f; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 37; *Vedic Reader*, p. 30; Griffith, *Rigveda*, I. 27 n. For other views of the same nature, see Dandekar, *Viṣṇu in the Veda* in *Festschrift Prof. P. V. Kane*, pp. 95 ff.

Spirit. Several reasons are adduced to prove that the position of Viṣṇu in the Ṛgvedic age is quite insignificant. Not more than *five* whole hymns and a few more stray verses are addressed here to this god, so that, judged by the statistical standard, he will have to be counted as a deity of the fourth rank. Besides, in most passages, he is lauded along with a host of other divinities, and many of the attributes given to him are those which he shares in common with many of them.[1] Viṣṇu is even stated to have sung the praise of Indra (RV. VIII. 15. 9), and to derive his power from that god (RV. VIII. 12. 27). From these considerations it should follow that Viṣṇu is no prominent god at all in the RV., and that he is not only on a footing of equality with other gods, but is often seen to be subordinate even to some of them.[2]

It is true that the hymns in which Viṣṇu is celebrated in the Ṛgveda are extremely small in number compared with those used in edifying Indra or Varuṇa; but to deny on this score to Viṣṇu the position of a great god in the Veda would only be to forget that, in a sacrificial collection like the Ṛgveda that is handed down to us, the comparative prominence of the numerous gods in the Vedic pantheon is not necessarily brought out to the fullest extent.[3] It is not true even to say that Viṣṇu might have been quite popular among the masses, while the priestly classes, with its love for sacrifices did not think much of him.[4] That would be to think

[1] For instance, like Viṣṇu, Indra takes strides, spreads out the spaces and creates the wide air (RV. VI. 69. 5; VII. 99. 6). Along with Mitra, Varuṇa, and the Maruts, *Viṣṇu* sings the praises of Indra (RV. VIII. 15. 9).

[2] Weber stresses this by pointing out that *Viṣṇu* owes almost all his famous qualities to Indra (*Indische Streifen*, II. 226 ff., cited by Muir, *op. cit*, p. 298).

[3] cf. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, I. 109 ff.

[4] Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 166; In a very interesting study of Viṣṇu in the Veda published recently, R. N. Dandekar challenges both the views that this god is not prominent in the Ṛgveda and that he is un-Aryan in origin, and maintains that he must have been supreme in the popular religion of the

that when the seer praised Viṣṇu he did so with the utmost reluctance. This, however, cannot be, for the seer is seen to extol Viṣṇu's unique feat of taking the 'three strides' with as much gusto as the feat of any other prominent god of the Veda. No one who reads the hymns in praise of Viṣṇu can afford to the feel that this god 'occupied a somewhat subordinate place in the estimation and affections of the ancient ṛṣis'.[1] Of the three steps of Viṣṇu, two, we are told, are visible to the naked eye, but the third and highest is beyond mortal ken. It is accessible to none, not even to the winged birds in their flight. (RV. I. 155. 5 ; VII. 99. 2). It is the highest place (*paramaṁ padam*)[2] or the highest path (*paramaṁ pāthaḥ*),[3] and is known only to its owner who guards it zealously (RV. X. 1. 3).[4] This is a station situated far away from this earth (*kṣayantam asya rajasaḥ parāke*).[5] The same is the import of other passages[6] which describe Viṣṇu as living on high (*bṛhan kṣayaḥ*), as mountain-abiding (*giriṣṭhā*) or mountain-dwelling (*girikṣit*). It is also a fact that Viṣṇu shares many an attribute with the other gods, and that he is even described sometimes as subordinate to Indra.[7] But those are all in hymns addressed to Indra. Seeing that in a

masses, though neglected by the higher class composed of priestly intellectuals *Festschrift Prof. P. V. Kane*, p. 111). That Viṣṇu is not quite important in so far as sacrifices are concerned lends some justification to the latter part of the statement ; but the former part must remain unsettled till the community to which devotees of Viṣṇu like *Medhātithi Kāṇva* or *Dīrghatamas* exactly belonged is known with certainty

[1] Muir, *op. cit.*, IV. 98

[2] RV. I. 22. 20, 21.

[3] RV. III. 55. 10.

[4] cf. RV. III. 55. 10 ; VII. 99. 1.

[5] RV. VII. 100. 5.

[6] RV. VIII. 15. 9 ; I. 154. 2, 3.

[7] Such descriptions come chiefly from insignificant members of the family of Kaṇva like *Parvata*, *Goṣūkti* and *Aśvasūkti*. The Kāṇva family is moreover known for its special devotion to Indra. But *Viṣṇu* is really the highest god in the Veda.

kathenotheistic religion like that of the Ṛgveda, each god is, for the time being, supreme in the mind of the devotee, it is not right to pay much attention to attributes given to the gods by their worshippers when they are in divine ecstacy.

The personality of *Viṣṇu* is far more important in the Veda than is ordinarily estimated judging him from these criteria. His importance lies in the very fact that he is not a sacrificial deity.[1] As Yāska would classify him, he is a god of the celestial region (*dyusthāna*) living on the highest plane, compared with those gods that live in the atmospheric (*antarikṣa*) or terrestrial (*pṛthivī*) regions. While almost all the other gods receive sacrificial offerings like *havis* or *soma*, this is the god who is content with mere prayer (*stuti*). Like the god of the Puritans, he cares for piety rather than sacrifice, for devotion rather than offerings. It is thus stated that the group of Manes that go to his abode after their death is composed only of the pious (*devayavaḥ, sūrayaḥ*)[2] among these Vedic poets. Their eye is ever directed towards this highest abode of Viṣṇu which is situated like an eye in Heaven (*divīva cakṣur ātatam*). It is their fond desire always that they should attain to the dear domain of Viṣṇu where are the many-horned nimble kine, where men devoted to the gods rejoice,[3] and which is a veritable spring of nectar :

तद्विष्णो॑ः प॒र॒मं प॒दं सदा॑ पश्यन्ति सू॒रय॑ः ।
दि॒वी॑व॒ चक्षु॒रात॑तम् ॥

[1] For details in this connection, see *infra*. It is of interest to note here that deities which are *Sūktabhāks* are not at all prominent in the Ṛgveda that has come down to us.

[2] cf. RV. I. 50. 10 which says that the godly attain to the supreme light of the Sun (*devatrā sūryam aganma jyotir uttamam*). Another passage (RV. X. 15. 3) where is mentioned the connection between the Manes and the wide-step of Viṣṇu, should also be of the same import.

[3] According to RV. VIII. 29. 7, the gods themselves rejoice in this abode (*yatra devāso madanti*).

[4] RV. I. 22. 20; 154, 5, 6.

तदस्य प्रियमभि पाथो अश्यां नरो यत्र देवयवो मदन्ति ।
उरुक्रमस्य स हि बन्धुरित्था विष्णोः पदे परमे मध्व उत्सः ॥
ता वां वास्तून्युश्मसि गमध्यै यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः ।
अत्राह तदुरुगायस्य वृष्णः परमं पदमव भाति भूरि ॥

In the later age of the Epics and Purāṇas, Viṣṇu occupies the high place of one among the trinity, and even forms to his sectaries the highest god. But the Purāṇic Viṣṇu is only a logical development of the god of the Vedic period. His history is the history of one regular and normal development. There are no traces here of breaks and stop-gaps, of sudden elevations and recognitions. From the Vedic age down to the age of the Epics and Purāṇas, Viṣṇu is primarily revered for being the saviour and asylum of departed souls.[1]

To sum up: the Vedic seers believed in a three-fold heaven. The lowest of them which was intimately connected with *soma* or moon and belonged to *Yama*, formed the destination of people of ordinary merit like sacrificers and philanthropists. The remaining *two* heavens were situated in the higher region. The realm of *Savitṛ* and *Sūrya* was the lower of these two, and in this were accommodated men like the *Ṛbhus* and the *Maruts* whose exceptional merit brought them immortality and divinity. The other which is no other than the highest heaven of *Viṣṇu* was accessible only to the seers and, even among these seers, only to those who were known for their piety and devotion towards the gods.

[1] cf. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 170; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 458; *Notes on Dyaus, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa and Rudra* (*J.A.O.S.*, XVI, cxlvii ff.)

CHAPTER V

DEVAYĀNA AND PITṚYĀṆA

IN the previous chapter, an attempt was made to describe the worlds above to which the Souls rise after the death of the body. This world is the highest of the three worlds, the other two being the earth which is the lowest and the *antarikṣa* which is the middle region. This highest heaven-world again appears to have three different planes and they were dealt with in the previous chapter. In the present chapter, the same topic, *viz.*, the worlds above, is continued. Here *two* specific terms frequently met with in the Ṛgveda are taken up for consideration in detail.

The chief text[1] of the doctrine of transmigration runs as follows:

असौ वाव लोको गौतमाग्निस्तस्यादित्य एव समिद्रश्मयो धूमोऽहरर्चिश्चन्द्रमा अङ्गारा नक्षत्राणि विस्फुलिङ्गाः । तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवाः श्रद्धां जुह्वति तस्या आहुतेः सोमो राजा संभवति ॥

पर्जन्यो वाव गौतमाग्निस्तस्य वायुरेव समिदभ्रं धूमो विद्युदर्चिरशनिरङ्गारा ह्रादनयो विस्फुलिङ्गाः । तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवाः सोमं राजानं जुह्वति तस्या आहुतेर्वर्षं संभवति ॥

[1] *Ch. Up.*, V. 4-10; the same occurs in the *Bṛ. Up.*, VI. 2. 9-15 with minor variations and in a somewhat briefer form.

पृथिवी वाव गौतमाग्निस्तस्याः संवत्सर एव समिदाकाशो धूमो रात्रिरर्चिर्दिशोऽङ्गारा अवान्तरदिशो विस्फुलिङ्गाः। तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवा वर्षं जुह्वति तस्या आहुतेरन्नं संभवति ॥

पुरुषो वाव गौतमाग्निस्तस्य वागेव समित्प्राणो धूमो जिह्वार्चिश्चक्षुरङ्गाराः श्रोत्रं विस्फुलिङ्गाः। तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवा अन्नं जुह्वति तस्या आहुते रेतः संभवति ॥

योषा वाव गौतमाग्निस्तस्या उपस्थ एव समिद्यदुपमन्त्रयते स धूमो योनिरर्चिर्यदन्तः करोति तेऽङ्गारा अभिनन्दा विस्फुलिङ्गाः। तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवा रेतो जुह्वति तस्या आहुतेर्गर्भः संभवति ॥

इति तु पञ्चम्यामाहुतावापः पुरुषवचसो भवन्तीति स उल्बावृतो गर्भो दश वा नव वा मासानन्तः शयित्वा यावद्वाथ जायते। स जातो यावदायुषं जीवति तं प्रेतं दिष्टमितोऽग्नय एव हरन्ति यत एवेतो यतः संभूतो भवति ॥

तद्य इत्थं विदुः। ये चेमेऽरण्ये श्रद्धा तप इत्युपासते तेऽर्चिषमभिसंभवन्त्यर्चिषोऽहरह्न आपूर्यमाणपक्षमापूर्यमाणपक्षाद्यान्षडुदङ्ङेति मासांस्तान् ॥

मासेभ्यः संवत्सरं सवत्सरादादित्यमादित्याच्चन्द्रमसं चन्द्रमसो विद्युतं तत्पुरुषोऽमानवः स एनान्ब्रह्म गमयत्येष देवयानः पन्था इति ॥

अथ य इमे ग्राम इष्टापूर्ते दत्तमित्युपासते ते धूममभिसंभवन्ति धूमाद्रात्रिं रात्रेरपरपक्षमपरपक्षाद्यान्षड्दक्षिणैति मासांस्तान्नैते संवत्सरमभिप्राप्नुवन्ति ॥

मासेभ्यः पितृलोकं पितृलोकादाकाशमाकाशाच्चन्द्रमसमेष सोमो राजा तद्देवानामन्नं तं देवा भक्षयन्ति ॥

तस्मिन्यावत्संपातमुषित्वाथैतमेवाध्वानं पुनर्निवर्तन्ते यथेतमाकाशमाकाशाद्वायुं वायुर्भूत्वा धूमो भवति धूमो भूत्वाभ्रं भवति ॥

अभ्रं भूत्वा मेघो भवति मेघो भूत्वा प्रवर्षति त इह व्रीहियवा ओषधिवनस्पतयस्तिलमाषा इति जायन्तेऽतो वै खलु दुर्निष्प्रपतरं यो यो ह्यन्नमत्ति यो रेतः सिञ्चति तद्भूय एव भवति ॥

तद्य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन्ब्राह्मणयोनिं वा क्षत्रिययोनिं वा वैश्ययोनिं वाथ य इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशोह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरञ्श्वयोनिं वा सूकरयोनिं वा चण्डालयोनिं वा ॥

अथैतयोः पथोर्न कतरेणचन तानीमानि क्षुद्राण्यसकृदावर्तीनि भूतानि भवन्ति जायस्व म्रियस्वेत्येतत्तृतीयं स्थानं तेनासौ लोको न संपूर्यते तस्माज्जुगुप्सेत तदेष श्लोकः ॥

स्तेनो हिरण्यस्य सुरां पिबंश्च गुरोस्तल्पमावसन्ब्रह्महा चैते पतन्ति चत्वारः पञ्चमश्चाचरंस्तैरिति ॥

अथ ह य एतानेवं पञ्चाग्नीन्वेद न सह तैरप्याचरन्पाप्मना लिप्यते शुद्धः पूतः पुण्यलोको भवति य एवं वेद य एवं वेद ॥

This admits of two natural divisions[1], the one part dealing with the 'Five Fires' and the other with the 'two ways'; while according to the former theory, *s'raddhā* seems to be primarily responsible for the Soul's return to earth, it is this alone that, according to the latter, leads to *Brahman* without return; the former theory appears to assume the absence of

[1] Deussen (*Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 333) makes a chronological distinction between these two parts, and would call that teaching the doctrine of the 'Five fires' as the earlier portion, and the other as the later. The *Nirukta* (XIII. 19 ff.) makes a curious jumble of these two parts in the course of its account of the doctrine of Transmigration.

any recompense in the other world for, according to it, the Soul, after having journeyed to Heaven, returns almost immediately, to a new existence through the five transitory stations—heaven, atmosphere, earth, father and mother; but, to the latter, while those traversing through the northern path of the Sun reach *Brahman*, not to return to earth again, those that go through the southern path go to the Moon, stay there till their deeds permit and return to earth by the very way through which they went up.

The 'Doctrine of the two ways' which is essentially based on the conception that, at death, it is only the body that is destroyed and that the Soul continues its existence to reap the consequences of its deeds, speaks of two ways,[1] the way of the Gods (*Devayāna*) and the way of the fathers (*Pitṛyāṇa*); those who know the doctrine of the five fires (*pañcāgnividyā*) or who meditate with faith upon *Satya* are the people who are privileged to travel by the former path which leads them to the Gods or to the Absolute *Brahman*; when, at death, their body is burnt on the pyre, the Soul enters the flame, then the day, the bright-half of the month, the six months when the Sun moves northward, the year,[2] the Sun, the Moon, the lightning, and finally, led by a superhuman person (*amānavaḥ puruṣaḥ*), Brahman, never more to return to earth; but those whose merit consists only in the performance of philanthropic acts like sacrifice (*yajña*), bounty

[1] cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, VIII. 24 ff. where distinctioh is made between those that die in the *Uttarāyaṇa* (northward course of the Sun) and those that die during *Dakṣiṇāyana* (southward course of the Sun). The story in the *Mahābhārata* (XI. 119. 96 ff.) that *Bhīṣma* waited till *Uttarāyaṇa* to breathe his last is based on the same conviction.

[2] According to the *Bṛ. Up.*, VI. 2. 15, after the Soul passes through the six months during the northward course of the Sun, it enters the world of the Gods (*Devaloka*), then the Sun and the lightning fire. A person consisting of mind (*mānasaḥ*) enters these regions of lightning, and conducts the Soul to the world of Brahman where it stays for ever.

(*dāna*) and penance (*tapas*) have to travel, at death, by the other path ; their Soul first enters the smoke of the pyre, then the night, the dark-half of the month, the six months when the Sun moves south-ward, the world of the Fathers (*pitṛloka*) in lieu of the year, the ether, and finally the Moon which is the final destination for these Souls, and not a mere stage of transit as in the previous case. Here the departed Souls remain for a time enjoying the rewards of their good deeds in company with the *pitṛs*. This enjoyment lasts only as long as the store of Karma permits, and after that is exhausted they return to earth by the very path through which they went up. After regaining the state of smoke, they get the form of mist, then cloud, rain, plants, and food. The remaining stages which finally bring about the rebirth are very difficult, for this can happen only when they are eaten as food and emitted as seed into the womb ; and the quality of their birth also depends on the nature of their conduct in their previous existence; those of good conduct are reborn as a brahmin, or a kṣatriya or a vaiśya as the degree of the virtue allows, and those of stinking conduct are reborn as a dog, or a hog, or as an outcast (*caṇḍāla*).[1]

We will now see how much of this Upaniṣadic doctrine of the 'two ways' was familiar to the Ṛgvedic Aryans. The

[1] *Ch. Up.*, V. 10. 7. ; the *Bṛ Up.*, omits to makes this distinction among the Souls returning from the Moon. The *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* (I. 2 ff.) seems to reconcile the two Upaniṣads when it makes all Souls go first, without exception, to the Moon. There the Souls are judged and according to the result, they go either by the *Devayāna* which leads to *Brahman* without return, or take up a new birth 'of a worm, or a fly, or a fish, or a bird, or a lion, or a boar, or a serpent, or a tiger, or a man, or something else; cf. Socrates who remarks in the *Phaedo* that those who on earth have followed after gluttony and wantonness and drunkenness, without the least thought of avoiding them, would pass after death into asses and animals of that sort, and those following injustice, tyranny and violence into wolves, hawks or kites, while those practising virtues like temperance and justice pass into some gentle and social kind like their own, such as bees or wasps or ants, or back again into the form of man (Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, II. 225 ff.)

two words *Devayāna* and *Pitṛyāṇa* which are found in the Upaniṣadic text, appear in the Ṛgveda also.

The word *Devayāna* occurs thirteen times in all in the different cases. Sāyaṇa understands the word in *two* broad senses; either it means the sacrificial offering which is intended for the gods [1] or which leads the devotee to the gods; [2] or, the path which leads to the gods,[3] or by which men travel to meet the gods,[4] or by which the gods travel to secure the offerings of their worshippers.[5] Grassmann understands the word only in two senses. His meanings [6] run thus: (1) *Zu den Göttern seinen Gang nehmend* (affording the journey to the gods); (2) *den Göttern zum Gange dienend* (serving the gods in their journey). But Roth and Böhtlingk understand the word exactly in the same way as Sāyaṇa when they interpret [7] the word to mean (1) *Zu den Göttern gehend, strebend*; (2) *Göttern zum Wandel, Verkehr, Aufenthalt dienend*; *so heissen namentlich die pfade, auf welchen die himmlischen herniedersteigen, opfer zu ihnen gelangen, überhaupt der Verkehr zwischen Himmel und Erde geht*; (3) *der zu den Göttern fuhrende Weg.*

[1] RV. I. 162. 4.

[2] RV. X. 181. 3.

[3] RV. VII. 76. 2.

[4] RV. VII. 38. 8.; X. 51. 2, 5.; 98. 11.

[5] RV. I. 72. 7; 183. 6; 184. 6; IV. 37. 1.; V. 43. 6.; X. 18. 1.

[6] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 635.; the following explanatory note is added at the end of the second of these meanings: *von den Wegen auf denen sie vom Himmel herabkommen und zu ihm hinaufsteigen, und die daher auch der einzuschlagen hat, der zu ihnen hinauf will.* According to this note, the second meaning is given about the paths by which they (gods) come down from heaven and go up to it, and which therefore he too has to tread who desires to go up to it (Heaven).

[7] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, III. 753.

The word *Pitṛyāṇa* occurs but *once* in the RV.; the following verse (X. *2.* 7) gives the context :

यं त्वा द्यावापृथिवी यं त्वापस्त्वष्टा यं त्वा सुजनिमा जजान ।
पन्थामनु प्रविद्वान्पितृयाणं द्युमदग्ने समिधानो वि भाहि ॥

In this verse, Agni who has been engendered by Heaven and Earth, by the Waters, by Tvaṣṭṛ, by the glorious Creator, and who is cognisant of the path, the road of the *pitṛs*, is requested to shine brilliantly on being kindled. Sāyaṇa translates the word *Pitṛyāna* which occurs in the third quarter of this verse to mean 'the path by which the Fathers travel'. Grassmann follows Sāyaṇa when he also interprets [1] the word to mean 'the path by means of which the spirits of ancestors move' (*von den Geistern der Ahnen betreten*). So do Roth and Böhtlingk when they take [2] the word in the sense of 'that by which the manes travel' (*von den Manen betreten*).

Keith seems to base his conclusion entirely on the evidence of the *three* meanings of *Devayāna* mentioned above when he remarks [3] that "the *Devayāna*, originally in the Ṛgveda the path by which the sacrifice of a man was borne to the gods or by which they came for it, and by which on death he joined the Fathers and the gods in Heaven, is transformed into the path by which the Soul goes to the gods or to the Absolute." But there are evidences in the Ṛgveda itself to show that the seers knew something more about the 'two paths' than they are usually considered to know. The *Devayāna* is described as 'lustrous' in the following verses :

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 815.
[2] *Op. cit.*, IV. 719.; cf. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 171.
[3] *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 575.

प्र मे पन्था देवयाना अदृश्रन्नमर्धन्तो वसुभिरिष्कृतासः ।
अभूदु केतुरुषसः पुरस्तात्प्रतीच्यागादधि हर्म्येभ्यः ॥[1]
को मा ददर्श कतमः स देवो यो मे तन्वो बहुधा पर्यपश्यत् ।
क्वाह मित्रावरुणा क्षियन्त्यग्नेर्विश्वाः समिधो देवयानीः ॥[2]
एहि मनुर्देवयुर्यज्ञकामोऽरंकृत्या तमसि क्षेष्यग्ने ।
सुगान्पथः कृणुहि देवयानान्वह हव्यानि सुमनस्यमानः ॥[3]

In the first-half of the first verse, the seer says that he has beheld the paths leading to the gods (*Devayāna*), innocuous and glorious with light (*vasubhir iṣkṛtāsaḥ*). In the second-half of the second verse, Agni is made to ask Mitra and Varuṇa if there exist any people who have seen his manifold forms which serve as the luminous vehicle of the gods (*samidhaḥ devayānīḥ*). In the second and third quarters of the last verse, the fully lustrous Agni is requested to make straight the paths traversed by the gods (*araṁkṛtyā tamasi kṣeṣy agne sugān pathaḥ kṛṇuhi devayānān*), thereby suggesting that he should illumine those paths which, on account of their darkness, are otherwise hard to cross.

These passages clearly point out that the Ṛgvedic seers were fully conversant with the idea that the *Devayāna* is 'lustrous'. In the Upaniṣads we find, as noticed already,[4] that the 'brightness' of this path is specially emphasized in contrast with the other which is always associated with darkness. When, therefore, we see that the Ṛgvedic seers are already aware of this conception, the conclusion is obvious that this idea is not the creation of the Upaniṣadic period, but was adopted from earlier times.

[1] RV. VII. 76. 2.
[2] RV. X. 51. 2.
[3] RV. X. 51. 5.
[4] *Supra*, p. 91 f.

That these seers are familiar also with the Upaniṣadic idea that the *Devayāna* is the path of the immortals, and that one who would attain to the world of gods or to immortality must pass through Agni, become clear on the examination of the following passages from the RV. :

परं मृत्यो अनु परेहि पन्थां यस्ते स्व इतरो देवयानात् ।
चक्षुष्मते शृण्वते ते ब्रवीमि मा नः प्रजां रीरिषो मोत वीरान् ॥[1]

एतान्यग्ने नवतिं सहस्रा सं प्र यच्छ वृष्ण इन्द्राय भागम् ।
विद्वान्पथ ऋतुशो देवयानानप्यौलानं दिवि देवेषु धेहि ॥[2]

विद्वाँ अग्ने वयुनानि क्षितीनां व्यानुषक्छुरुधो जीवसे धाः ।
अन्तर्विद्वाँ अध्वनो देवयानानतन्द्रो दूतो अभवो हविर्वाट् ॥[3]

In the first verse,[4] death is asked to depart differently through a path which is its own (*yaḥ te svaḥ*) and distinct from the path of the gods (*itaro devayānāt*). We see here already the Upaniṣadic idea that mortality has nothing to do with the *Devayāna*, and that to traverse by it is to attain immortality. In the second verse, Agni is credited with the knowledge of the path of the Gods and is requested to place Aulāna in Heaven among the gods. This is a clear anticipation of the Upaniṣadic conception that the Soul whose merit allows it to pass through *Devayāna*, first enters the flame of the pyre (*agni*) on its way to the world of *Brahman*. Aulāna (S'antanu)

[1] RV. X. 18. 1.

[2] RV. X. 98. 11.

[3] RV. I. 72. 7.

[4] According to R.D. Ranade (*Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, p. 159 n.). the *Devayāna* which is mentioned in this verse has the same sense as in the Upaniṣads, and the path which is described here as 'different. from' that of the Gods must be only the way of the Fathers *i.e. Pitṛyāṇa.*; cf. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 171.

may be construed as the typical human being in Ṛgvedic India whose merit entitled him to share Heaven, the world of the Gods, and who could be enabled to achieve his reward only through the agency of Agni *i.e.*, after his body was cremated at death on the funeral pyre. The third quarter of the last verse is taken by Sāyaṇa to mean that Agni is conversant with the path of the Gods (*Devayāna*) which lies between Heaven and Earth (*dyāvāpṛthivyor madhye jānan adhvanaḥ mārgān . . . devayānān devā yair mārgair gacchanti tān jānann ityarthaḥ*). If Sāyaṇa's interpretation here is acceptable,[1] this verse can be taken as an additional evidence to show that the Ṛgvedic seers knew, long before the Upaniṣadic age, that the *Devayāna* leads to the world of Gods *i.e.* Heaven.

Thus the two words *Devayāna* and *Pitṛyāṇa* denote two distinct paths leading to the worlds above. They may either be called paths or regions through which Souls of men and gods traverse. In this connection we have to consider those Ṛgvedic words which are frequently employed in that Saṁhitā to denote 'a path' or 'a way'. Six words answer to this description, but only *three* deserve notice at present.[2]

[1] Griffith understands the word *antarvidvān* to mean 'deeply skilled', unlike Sāyaṇa to whom it means 'knowing as existing between (Heaven and earth)'. Grassmann (*Rigveda*, II 74) supports the former when he takes the word to mean *kundig* (skilled) and translates the whole quarter thus: '*Der Wege kundig, die die Götter wandern*'. Though Sāyaṇa's explanation here seems to be pedantic, he is supported by RV. X. 88. 15 which expressly declares that the paths of the gods and fathers lies between Heaven and Earth.

[2] The *three* words omitted from consideration here are *patha*, *pada*, and *vayuna*; the first occurs over 150 times in the different cases, and is mostly taken by Sāyaṇa in the sense of *mārga* (road or way) and sometimes in the figurative sense of 'an expedient', but Grassmann (*Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 767), and Roth and Böhtlingk (*Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, IV. 420) understand the word always in the sense of *Pfade* (path) or *Weg* (way), the second similarly occurs nearly 100 times in the various cases, and generally means 'to go' (*gehen*), 'to stride' or 'stalk' (*schreiten*), or 'to tread' (*treten*); the third occurs 34 times in all and is understood in various senses; in three verses at least (RV. II. 34. 4; VI. 7. 5; VIII 66. 8) the word means 'a path'. But all these occurrences of the *three* words are of little significance in the present context.

The word *Gātu* occurs over sixty times in all in the Ṛgveda in the different case-forms, forty-eight times independently and nineteen times as part of a compound. Sāyaṇa understands[1] it in a number of senses such as 'one who moves', or 'movement' or 'a place which deserves approach' (*gantavya*), or 'path or way' (*mārga*), or 'house' (*gṛha*), or 'happiness' (*sukha*) or 'Earth' (*bhūmi*), or 'sacrificial place' (*yajñamārga*), or an 'expedient' (*upāya*) or 'attainment of the fruit' (*phalaprāpti*), or 'to sing or to pray' (*stotum*), or 'that which is fit to be sung or known' (*stotavyaṁ jñātavyaṁ vā*). In the sense of 'a path or way' (*Gang*, *bahn*), the word occurs seventeen times[2] and, of these occurrences, the following *two* verses deserve attention :

यमो नो गातुं प्रथमो विवेद नैषा गव्यूतिरपभर्तवा उ ।
यत्रा नः पूर्वे पितरः परेयुरेना जज्ञानाः पथ्या३ अनु स्वाः ॥ [3]
वीळु चिद्दृळ्हा पितरो न उक्थैरद्रिं रुजन्नङ्गिरसो रवेण ।
चक्रुर्दिवो बृहतो गातुमस्मे अहः स्वर्विविदुः केतुमुस्राः ॥ [4]

In the first verse, *Yama* is described as the first to find out a way which is not to be taken away. To this place the ancestors of old have repaired, and to it alone go those born since then, each one along his own way; in the second verse, *Aṅgirases*, the ancestors, are described as having found out the way to Heaven. The value of these two passages consists in the definite allusion they make to a path which is

[1] cf. Roth and Böhtlingk, *op. cit.*, II. 729 ff.; Grassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

[2] RV. I. 71.2; II. 20.5; 21.5; III. 4.4; 31.9; IV. 55.4; VI. 30.3; VII. 47.4; 63.5; IX. 85.4: 96.10, 15; 97.18; X. 14.2; 49.9; 61.25; 99.8.

[3] RV. X. 14.2.

[4] RV. I. 71.2.

exclusively used by the ancestors (*pitaraḥ*) on their way to Heaven which is no more than the place where all the dead meet again after death,[1] in contrast with the *Devayāna* which is used by the gods for their transit when they go to their devotees to receive worship and offerings, and by which men who go to the gods travel. Nor was this path of the ancestors discovered by any god for the help of the mortals. *Yama* or *Aṅgiras* who is considered to be the discoverer of this path, is no more than the primeval ancestor of the Ṛgvedic seers. In her dialogue with Yama, Yamī calls him 'the only mortal' (RV. X. 10. 3). In another place (RV. X. 13. 4), Yama is said to have chosen death and abandoned his body. He passed to the other world, finding out the path for many,[2] to where the ancient fathers passed away (RV. X. 14. 1, 2). As the first and the oldest of the dead, Yama could easily be regarded as the chief of the dead that followed him. Hence it is perhaps that he is frequently [3] denominated 'king'. Yama is sometimes enumerated along with gods like Agni,[4] but the fact remains, that, in the entire Ṛgveda, Yama is no where expressly called a god.

The character of *Aṅgirases* as the 'ancestors' of the Ṛgvedic seers is still more clearly emphasized. A single Aṅgiras being regarded as their ancestor, they are also termed 'sons of Aṅgiras (RV. X. 62. 5). They are frequently spoken of as 'fathers' (*pitaraḥ*),[5] 'our fathers' (*pitaro naḥ*),[6]

[1] Yama, son of Vivasvat, is thus called 'the assembler of men' (*saṅgamanaṁ janānām*), for all the dead who are virtuous go to him (RV. X. 14. 1).

[2] The AV. (XVIII. 3. 13) is more explicit when it says that *Yama* is the first mortal to die.

[3] RV. X. 14. 2, 4, 7; 16. 9; IX. 113. 8.

[4] RV. X. 64. 3; 92. 11; *Agni*, *Yama* and *Mātariśvan* are once (RV. I. 164. 46) mentioned together as the names of the *One Being*.

[5] RV. X. 62. 2; 14. 4.

[6] RV. I. 71. 2; X. 14. 6.

or 'our ancient fathers' (*naḥ pūrve pitaraḥ*).[1] They are once (RV. X. 14. 6) mentioned as 'fathers' with the Bhṛgus and the Atharvans, being especially associated with Yama (RV. X. 14. 3 ff.). They are said to have thought of the first ordinance of sacrifice (RV. X. 67. 2), and as a result of this merit are spoken of as having obtained immortality as well as the friendship of Indra. It is, therefore, clear that Yama and Aṅgirases are no more than the ancestors of the Ṛgvedic seers.[2] When, therefore, we are told that they found a path which leads to a place (*i.e.*, the world of Yama) where these two, in company with their virtuous descendants, enjoy an eternal bout (RV. X. 135. 1), we are not far from the Upaniṣadic conception that the sacrificers and philanthropists who travel, at death, by the *Pitṛyāṇa* attain the Moon and enjoy there. The momentariness of this enjoyment must have been emphasized in the Upaniṣads solely with the purpose of pointing out the inferiority of this bliss as compared with that of those who attain *Brahman* and become immortal. This idea is not unfamiliar to the Ṛgveda which speaks of the *Ṛbhus* as having attained 'divinity' owing to their special merit (RV. IV. 35. 8), and of the *Aṅgirases* as having attained immortality for a similar reason (RV. X. 67. 2), while Heaven is the reward for all those who practise rigorous penance (*tapas*)

[1] RV. I. 62. 2.

[2] This is further proved by the fact that Yama and Aṅgirases are also taken into account in enumerating the 'ancestors' who strengthened the gods by sacrifices, who derived strength by their aid, and, of whom, some rejoice by the call *svāhā* and others in *svadhā*, the call by which the Manes are usually invoked (RV. X. 14.3); cf. the *Siddhānta Kaumudī* on *Pāṇini*, II. 3.16: *namaḥ svasti svāhā svadhā laṁvaṣaḍyogāc ca*, which by its illustrations, *agnaye svāhā, pitṛbhyas svadhā*, points out that while the gods are to be addressed by *svāhā*, the manes are to be addressed by *svadhā*. For a full discussion of the relative meanings of these two words, as also for the establishment of the view that the distinction between the Gods and the Manes was clearly understood even by the Ṛgvedic seers, see C. Kunhan Raja, *Svāha, Svadhā and Svasti* (*J.O.R.M.*, I. 16 ff).

for heroes who risk their lives in battle (RV. X. 154. 2 ff.), and above all for those who bestow liberal sacrificial gifts.[1] If in the Upaniṣadic age, one who would attain immortality was required to be well-versed in the *pañcāgnividyā* or to meditate with faith upon *Satya*, this could be achieved in the Ṛgvedic age by people who did wondrous but beneficent deeds. The *Ṛbhus*, sons of Sudhanvan and grandsons of a man, are thus said to have obtained their *divinity* by enlivening a dead cow (RV. IV. 33. 4), by making the ladle (*camasa*) four-fold (RV.IV. 35. 3), and by making their aged parents young (RV. I. 20. 4), and the *Aṅgirases* are said to have attained 'immortality' as a reward for having thought out the first ordinance of sacrifice. The *Maruts* are said to have obtained Heaven by their special powers (*tavasā*) [RV. I. 85. 7]. Similarly, if the Vedic seer attained the privilege of enjoyment in the Heaven of *Yama* for his austerities, or bravery, or philanthropy, the Upaniṣadic seer obtained the privilege of enjoyment in the *Pitṛloka* (*i.e.* the Moon) for his sacrifices and philanthropy. The Ṛgvedic conception of divinity or immortality and Heaven must have, therefore, greatly inspired the Upaniṣadic *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛyāṇa*.

Rajas occurs nearly one hundred and fifty times in the Ṛgveda, and is understood in a number of senses; in the sense of 'a path' (*mārga*), the word can be construed in *five* verses[2] at least, out of which the following *two* are important for consideration now :

आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ।
हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेना देवो याति भुवनानि पश्यन् ॥[3]

[1] RV. X. 154. 3 ; I. 125. 5 ; X. 107. 2.

[2] RV. I. 35.2, 9 ; 116. 20 ; II. 31. 2 ; 62.6.

[3] RV. I.35.2.

हिरण्यपाणिः सविता विचर्षणिरुभे द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरीयते ।
अपामीवां बाधते वेति सूर्यमभि कृष्णेन रजसा द्यामृणोति ॥ [1]

In the first verse, Savitṛ is described as moving through the dark path (*kṛṣṇena rajasā*) and, in the second, that he penetrates to Heaven through the dark space. Sāyaṇa translates the word *rajasā* by 'region' (*lokena*) and Grassmann by 'aerial region' (*luftraum*), but even then the compound should mean something like 'path or course' *i.e.* a region through which the sun traverses. Seeing that Savitṛ is a solar deity, it is quite possible that the seer calls his course 'dark' (*kṛṣṇa*) because it is beyond man's perception. This supposition is all the more strengthened if the frequent descriptions of the region of Viṣṇu, another solar deity in the Ṛgveda, are also taken into consideration. Viṣṇu is described as living at a long distance from this world (*kṣayantam asya rajasaḥ parāke*),[2] and as he thus shows knowledge of the highest region, his greatness cannot be measured by anybody.[3] With this wide-going (*urugāya*) and wide-striding (*urukrama*) steps, Viṣṇu traverses throughout the terrestrial regions. Two of his steps are visible to men, but the third or highest is beyond the flight of birds or mortal ken;[4] it is known only to the saviour full of mercy. His highest step is like an eye fixed in Heaven, and it shines brightly down; towards this the wise ever look (*tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*).[5] Here in this dear abode of Viṣṇu, at this spring of sweetness, the pious rejoice :

[1] RV. I. 35.9.
[2] RV. VII. 100. 5.
[3] RV. VII. 99. 1.
[4] RV. I. 155. 5; VII. 99. 2.
[5] RV. I. 22. 20.

तदस्य प्रियमभि पाथो अश्यां नरो यत्र देवयवो मदन्ति ।
उरुक्रमस्य स हि बन्धुरित्था विष्णोः पदे परमे मध्व उत्सः ॥ [1]
ता वां वास्तून्युश्मसि गमध्यै यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः ।
अत्राह तदुरुगायस्य वृष्णः परमं पदमव भाति भूरि ॥ [2]

This Heaven of Viṣṇu by entering which the devotees are immortal, is also distinguished from the Heaven of Yama which is open to any virtuous man. Thus we are told:

तिस्रो द्यावः सवितुर्द्वा उपस्थाँ एका यमस्य भुवने विराषाट् ।
आणिं न रथ्यममृताधि तस्थुरिह ब्रवीतु य उ तच्चिकेतत् ॥ [3]

The fact that Savitṛ is associated with *immortality* is clear from the description that he granted immortality to the gods;[4] and the following verse where the seer wants to go by the path of the Sun and attain the place where his span of life (*āyus*)[5] can be extended *i.e.*, where he can be immortal, expresses clearly that the Sun also is connected with *immortality*:

उदीर्ध्वं जीवो असुर्न आगादप प्रागात्तम आ ज्योतिरेति ।
आरैक्पन्थां यातवे सूर्यायागन्म यत्र प्रतिरन्त आयुः ॥ [6]

It is thus clear that the Ṛgvedic seers knew of *two* kinds of virtuous people—those who, by good conduct, attain felicity in *Yama's* Heaven and those who, by superior merit like piety, attain the Heaven of the Solar Gods, *Viṣṇu*, *Savitṛ*, or *Sūrya*, and become immortal.

[1] RV. I. 154. 5.
[2] RV. I. 154. 6.
[3] RV. I. 35. 6.
[4] RV. IV. 54. 2.
[5] Sāyaṇa's rendering of the word *Āyus* into 'food' (*anna*) is rather fantastic.
[6] RV. I. 113. 16.

Sruti occurs eight times in all in the different cases; while both Sāyaṇa and Grassmann[1] generally interpret the word to mean 'a path or way' (*mārga=bahn, weg*), it is taken by them only once (RV. II. 13. 2) in the sense of 'a stream or current' (*apāṁ saraṇiḥ=strom, stromung*). Roth and Böhtlingk[2] understand the word throughout in the former sense of 'a way' (*weg*), 'road or street' (*strasse*). Of the *seven* passages[3] in which the word *Sruti* occurs in this sense, the following verse is significant:

द्वे स्रुती अशृणवं पितॄणामहं देवानामुत मर्त्यानाम् ।
ताभ्यामिदं विश्वमेजत्समेति यदन्तरा पितरं मातरं च ॥[4]

The seer says in this verse that he has heard of two paths, one of the gods and the other of the mortals, and that through one or the other of these two every creature that exists between Heaven and Earth (*i.e.*, in this world) proceeds on its way. Sāyaṇa sees in this verse a clear mention of the *Devayāna* and *Pitṛyāṇa*, the paths by which the dead travel to their respective destination as entitled by their merit, and which are so elaborately described in the *Bhagavadgītā* (VIII. 24 ff.). Griffith[5] takes the two ways to denote 'the way to the other world and the way back, regarded as distinct', but his translation of the first line into 'I have heard of two several pathways, way of the fathers, way of gods and mortals' is not clear. To Deussen,[6] to interpret this

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 1618.

[2] *Op. cit.*, VII. 1409.

[3] RV. I. 42. 3; 46. 11; VIII. 91. 1; IX. 78. 2; VI. 24. 4; X. 32. 7; 88. 15.

[4] RV. X. 88. 15=YV. XIX. 47

[5] *White Yajurveda*, p. 179 n.

[6] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 318. But the *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa* itself (XIV. 9. 1. 1=*Bṛ. Up.*, VI. 2. 1) interprets the verse in this way.

verse to mean the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛyāṇa* of the Upaniṣads would be only to strain the Saṁhitā text to make it suit the Upaniṣads. According to him, the 'two ways' meant here are those of day and night, and the import of the entire verse is that all beings are subject to the laws of day and night. Deussen justifies his interpretation on the ground that elsewhere[1] Agni is spoken of as having a dual character, Sun by day and Fire by night. His explanation could be accepted if it were certain that the present verse alludes to the 'paths' of Agni. But the allusion here seems to be only to the paths which are to be traversed (at death) by the whole lot of human beings.[2] Sāyaṇa is right when he gives this explanation, but he makes a jumble in understanding the first line where he seems to assign one path for the manes and gods, and another for the mortals (*pitṛṇāṁ ca devānāṁ ca utāpi ca martyānāṁ manuṣyāṇāṁ ca dve srutī dvau mārgau*). The same is the case with Griffith[3] when he speaks of one pathway of the fathers, and the other of gods and mortals. It seems possible to avoid all this confusion by taking *pitṛṇām* as an adjective of *Devānām*, and interpreting the first-half of the verse to mean "I have heard of two paths, one of (my) ancestors, the gods, and the other of mortals". It must be remembered that the seer of this verse is a descendant of the Aṅgirases who, as mentioned already, are said to have attained to divinity through their special prowess. Can it not be possible that the seer could be thinking here, when he speaks of 'two paths', the one achieved by his ancestors who

[1] RV. X. 83. 15.

[2] *cf.* A. A. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 171; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 145, n. 4.

[3] *Supra*; Muir's explanation of this verse is plausible when he makes *martyanām* the adjective of *sruti* (*Original Sanskrit Texts*, I. 434; V. 287).

obtained divinity, and the other that of ordinary mortals of inferior merit whose destiny lines in meeting Yama and revelling in his company? If so, this verse would be an additional evidence to show that two kinds of destiny for the virtuous were conceived by the Ṛgvedic people—immortality or divinity for those whose achievement is of the front rank, and heavenly bliss for the ordinary people whose merit lies only in their virtue. If besides this, we take note of the fact that these seers also knew that there is a distinction[1] in the paths traversed by the gods and the Manes, that the former is lustrous and belongs to the immortals, and that all those passing through it must pass through Agni, we are quite near the conception of the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛyāṇa* in the Upaniṣads which describe these two paths in all elaborateness and in greater detail.

The important point in the above two sections is the degree of contact between the Ṛgvedic thought and the Upaniṣadic thought as regards the condition of the Soul after death. The investigation has generally started on the assumption that the Ṛgveda represents more or less the initial stage in the history of Indian philosophic thought. But the mention of the ancient fore-fathers enjoying with Yama, and of Aṅgiras who first discovered the path along which the forefathers have travelled, suggest that the Vedic seers were aware of a long traditional belief in the efficacy of sacrifices in bringing happiness to man's Soul after death. It will not be far wrong to presume that, side by side with the text of the Veda now preserved to us, there must have been current a volume of

[1] *cf.* the Avestan conception of *Cinvato-peretu* or *Cinvat-peretu* (Bridge of the Separater) which is said to appear to the righteous to be nine spears' or twenty-seven arrows' length across, but as narrow as a razor's edge for the godless man, so that he falls into Hell. (Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 597, cited by J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 165).

thought about the mystery of man's fate after death. The doubts of Naciketas and his eagerness to know about the future of man must have occupied the thoughts of many a seer before the Upaniṣadic age. It is true that these thoughts are found in an orderly shape in the Upaniṣads, while only vague hints are met with in the Vedic texts. But even these vague hints are enough to show that the Upaniṣadic notions about the future of the Soul after death were evolved even in the Ṛgvedic times, though this may not be in the same logical way as it is found in the Upaniṣads.

CHAPTER VI

THEISM OF THE ṚGVEDA

So far the nature of the individual Soul and Brahman, the eternality of the Soul and its destination after death were discussed. The relation between god and man in the Ṛgvedic period forms the subject of this section.

" In the study of mankind," wrote Max Müller [1], " . . . there is no study more absorbing than that of the Religions of the world—the study . . . of the various languages in which man has spoken to his Maker, and of that language in which his Maker 'at sundry times and in divers manners' spake to man. . . . the great epochs in the world's history are marked, not by the foundation or destruction of Empires, by the migrations of races, or by French Revolutions. . . . The real history of man is the history of religion : the wonderful ways by which the different families of the human race advanced towards a truer knowledge and a deeper love to God. This is the foundation that underlies all profane history : it is the light, the soul, and life of history, and without it, all history would indeed be profane."

The religion of the Veda is no exception, and makes quite a fascinating and important branch of study. It is the

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, 1868, Vol. I, pp. 20 ff. ; *Selected Essays*, 1881, Vol. II., p. 129.

earliest deposit of the Aryan Faith, and 'possesses the same simplicity and transparency which distinguish the grammar of Sanskrit, from Greek, Latin or German grammar. We can watch in the Veda ideas and their names growing, which in Persia, Greece and Rome we meet with only as full-grown or as fast-decaying'.

To the general student of the Veda, its religion would appear to consist in nothing more than the worship of numerous gods who are, for the most part, personifications of the powers of Nature. Invocations are addressed to these gods, and these are not unoften accompanied by offerings of the soma-juice or by the sacrifice of clarified butter. It is thus essentially a polytheistic religion where numerous gods are worshipped by their respective devotees solely with the object of gaining material prosperity.

Yet, on closer study, it is possible to see that the Vedic religion is much more complex than it looks, and that it is difficult to describe its nature in precise terms. Thus it is that a host of scholars have called it by different names. Besides Polytheism, it has been called Animism, Anthropomorphism, Naturalism, Monotheism, Pantheism, Kathenotheism or Henotheism.

The study of the primitive Vedic conception of gods and spirits has made Oldenberg remark[1] that "the fundamental nature of the primary Indian Religion, surviving from the very remotest antiquity and rising to the surface of the Vedic times as a more or less ruinous wreckage, is essentially that of the savage's religion. All existence was considered to be animated with spirits, whose confused masses crowd upon each other, buzzing, flocking, swarming along with the phantom souls of the dead, and act, each according

[1] H. Oldenberg, *Ancient India*, pp. 5 ff.

to its nature, in every occurrence. If a human being fell ill, it was a spirit that had taken possession of him and imposed upon him his ills. The patient was cured by enticing the spirit from him with magic. A spirit was supposed to dwell in the flying arrow, and he who shot an arrow performed a magic which put the spirit into action. The spirits have sometimes human, sometimes animal form. . . . As they move hither and thither, the spirits may select a domicile, abiding or temporary, in some visible object. A feather, or a bone, or a stone at different times holds the spirit; and anon the spirit steals into a human being whom it makes ill, or throws into convulsions in which supernatural visions come to him and in which this spirit talks through him in confused phrases. The magician knew the art of flattering the spirits; he understood how to bar their passage, to terrify them, to deceive them, to compel them, to provoke them against his enemy. They are washed away with water, or consumed by fire; even the friendly spirits whenever they prove themselves intractable, are subjected to the same sort of irreverent treatment."

This conception of spirits forms only an aspect of the ancient Vedic religion, but constitutes by no means the basis of the whole belief. Like all religions, the religion of the Ṛgveda may have owed its origin to Animism, but it is wrong to suppose that it developed no further. There is in the Veda a very careful distinction made between the 'gods' and the 'demons'; the former concept was 'distilled from the contemplation of the gracious and kindly powers of nature', while the latter rose from 'the experience of nature's grim and hostile powers.' Not only did the Vedic seers distinguish these 'demons' from their 'gods', but they had a positive dislike towards them. This is amply borne out by the repeated

allusions in the Veda to the fight between the 'demons' and the great gods, wherein the latter are always victorious. It is sometimes suggested[1] that from the reverence paid to a soul there might spring up the worship of a god analogous to the worship of nature gods, and that this phenomenon can be observed by studying the character of gods like Rudra, Maruts or Yama. There is little that is probable in this conjecture, while it is much more likely that some priestly families like that of the Bhṛgus owe their position to the reverence paid to the dead.[2]

A good number of human qualities are attributed to most of the Vedic gods who are also conceived of very often as human in appearance.[3] Agni's tongue and limbs merely denote his flames. Some gods like Agni and Bṛhaspati are priests, while Indra and the Maruts represent the warriors among them. Tvaṣṭṛ and the Ṛbhus are the artisans, while Kṣetrapati, Urvarā, Sītā and Pūṣan may represent the agricultural community. The gods drive through the air in cars drawn by horses or some other animals. Their favourite food is what is dear also to their worshippers. It consists in milk, butter, grain, and the flesh of sheep, goats and cattle, and this is conveyed to them through sacrifices. As in the case of human beings, several kinds of relationship between the gods are spoken of. Gods like Agni, Indra and Varuṇa are thus joined in wedlock with Agnāyī, Indrāṇī and Varuṇānī respectively. The relationship of parents and children, and of brothers and sisters also exists among the gods. The dual-divinities Dyāvā-Pṛthivī are thus conceived of as the universal

[1] Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 60; Von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. 124.

[2] Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, I. 71.

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rigveda*, p. 11; *Vedic Reader*, p. xviii; Griswold, *Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 105 ff.

parents of all the other gods.[1] Uṣas is the daughter of Dyaus,[2] the sister of Bhaga, the kinswoman of Varuṇa,[3] and the wife of Sūrya (RV. VII. 75. 5). Night and dawn are sisters (RV. I. 124. 8). Agni is the son of Dyaus (RV. IV. 17. 4) and the brother of Indra (RV. VI. 59. 2). Mutual helpfulness and interchange of services also exists between the gods. Because Varuṇa prepares a path for Sūrya (RV. I. 24. 8), the latter reports to Mitra and Varuṇa concerning the sinfulness of men (RV. VII. 60. 1). Indra and other gods drink soma with the tongue of Agni (RV. II. 1. 14), and Indra repays his gratitude by winning over Vṛtra (RV. VIII. 12. 22) and giving peace thereby to all the gods including Agni. These descriptions of the Vedic gods do prove the anthropomorphic way in which their nature is conceived; but it is not possible, only on this account, to call the whole religion *Anthropomorphism*, for the degree of the exhibition of this is extremely variable, and in some cases the active element is constantly present.[4]

The Waters are indeed goddesses, but we also know that they are wholesome to drink; and the Sun is the child of the sky only because he rises there. Similarly, in the description of Uṣas as baring her bosom like a beautiful maiden, there is only comparison but no identity. Her real nature is obvious by such descriptions as that she appears morn after morn, dispels darkness (RV. VI. 64. 3) and reveals the path to men (RV. VII. 79. 1).

That these seers worshipped the different elements of Nature like fire, wind, water, rain, lightning, Sun and Moon shows, similarly, that there is the element of *Naturalism* in

[1] RV. I. 106. 3; IV. 56. 2; VI. 17. 7; VII. 53. 1 etc.

[2] RV. I. 124. 5.

[3] RV. I. 123. 5.

[4] Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 58 ff.

the religion of the Vedic people ; but since the Vedic pantheon did not consist entirely of these forces of Nature, but included many other kinds of divinities besides like Yama, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Indra, Bṛhaspati and Rudra, it would be wrong to call the entire religion by this name.

Having for a long time worshipped numerous divinities, the Vedic poets should have come to the conclusion that after all God is one, and the numerous gods are only names representing different phases of the One God. This tendency towards Monotheism [1] is found in one verse (RV. I. 164. 46) :

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥

where we are told that Agni, Yama, Varuṇa and Mātaris'van are but the names of the One God.

In its further development, this tendency towards Monotheism should have resulted in a *pantheistic* outlook which makes the highest God identical with the Universe. Gods like Hiraṇyagarbha and Puruṣa in the Vedic pantheon (RV. X. 121. 1 ; 90. 1, 2) answer to this description :

हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत् ।
स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥
सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वात्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम् ॥
पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥

[1] H. H. Wilson (*Essays*, II.51) says : "There can be no doubt that the fundamental doctrine of the Vedas is monotheism". The same view is held by M. Adolphe Pictet who, in his *Les Origines Indo-Européennes*, opines that the religion of the undivided Aryans was "monotheism more or less vaguely defined." (cited by M. Phillips, *Teaching of the Vedas*, p. 107).

Both these are synonymous with Prajāpati who is the most famous of the abstract gods conceived by the Vedic seers in their effort to attain the conception of the unity of the Universe. These gods are connected not only with the creation but with the entire government of the Universe. Prajāpati is thus[1] the first born, the golden germ (*hiraṇya-garbha*) "who creates the whole universe, who gives life, whose commands the gods obey, whose shadow is death and immortality, who is lord of man and beast, of the mountain and the sea," and combines in himself the duties of creator, ruler and preserver of the Universe.

Viśvakarman is another synonym of Prajāpati. Two hymns[2] are devoted in the RV. in praise of this divinity who appears there as "the creator, who, self-created, is not merely the material cause but also the efficient cause of the world."

Brahmaṇaspati and Vāk are two other divinities which should belong to the same class; the former is the lord of prayer whose mighty power to achieve all human aspirations cannot be questioned; the latter, the goddess of speech, has been extolled in one well-known hymn (RV. X. 125) as the supreme power, as the companion of the gods and the supporter of the world.

Vedic pantheism appears, however, in its perfection in the conception of Puruṣa (RV. X. 90) who appears not only as the creator of the world, but as something far beyond it.

It is Max Müller's view that it is wrong to call Vedic religion by any of these names, and that it should properly be called Henotheism or Kathenotheism. His own observations[3] in this respect merit attention: "If, therefore, there must be

[1] RV. X. 121.
[2] RV. X. 81, 82.
[3] *India: What It can Teach Us?*, pp. 145 ff.

a name for the religion of the Ṛgveda, Polytheism would seem at first sight the most appropriate. Polytheism, however, has assumed with us a meaning which renders it totally inapplicable to the Vedic religion. Our ideas of Polytheism being chiefly derived from Greece and Rome, we understand by it a certain more or less organised system of gods, different in power and rank, and all subordinate to a supreme God, Zeus or Jupiter. But the Vedic polytheism differs from the Greek and Roman polytheism. . . . In the Veda, however, the Gods worshipped as supreme by each sect stand still side by side. No one is first always and no one is last always. Even gods of a decidedly inferior and limited character assume occasionally in the eyes of a devoted poet above all other gods. It was necessary, therefore, for the purpose of accurate reasoning to have a name different from polytheism, to signify this worship of single gods, each occupying for the time a supreme position; and I proposed for it the name of 'Kathenotheism,' that is a worship of one god after another, or of Henotheism, the worship of single gods."

Sayce, however, does not seem to find any distinction between Polytheism and Henotheism. According to him, these are but "two phases of the same form of religious faith, the two sides as it were of the same prism. It matters little whether a multitude of gods are worshipped together or whether the worshipper addresses but one of them at the time, making him for the moment the supreme and single object of his religious reverence."[1]

Whitney objected[2] to Max Müller's view saying that 'no religion brings its gods into more frequent and varied

[1] *Introduction to the Science of Language*, II. 296.

[2] *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*, October 1881, (*J.A.O.S.*, 1885, Vol. XI, p. lxxxi).

juxtaposition and combination,' and that in the attributes which in the Veda seem to belong to a sole god, we see only ' natural exaggeration, committed in the fervour of devotion.'

In his interesting paper, entitled *Henotheism in the Rigveda*,[1] Hopkins seeks to examine the positions of both Max Müller and Whitney. It is his view that neither Müller nor Whitney is quite right or wrong in what they say on this subject. Whitney is right when he points out that the Vedic deities are not at all represented ' as independent of all the rest ', and that the laudation which, to Müller, indicated ' Henotheism ' is to be ascribed more ' to oriental exaggeration rather than sober theology ' ; and Müller is unquestionably right in maintaining that there is a world of difference between the polytheism of Hellas and such polytheism in the Ṛgveda as deserves the name henotheism. Yet it is difficult to agree entirely with both ; for, though the laudations in the Veda are often exaggerations, the same cannot be said of all of them, and the absence of a constant regal head which Müller stresses upon is rather a ' climatic than a theological matter.' The Vedic religion as a whole stands much nearer to pure nature worship, having for its causative the tremendous natural phenomena as spiritual powers of which the Hindu gods were representative. The absence of a permanent chief of the Vedic pantheon is explicit, and there is no authority to warrant the assumption of a temporary belief in any deity as an *only* deity. The apparent fulsomeness of the laudations is partially, if not wholly, to be explained as a matter of taste. A careful examination of the religion of the Ṛgveda shows that there was from the very beginning, permeating the whole collection, a popular chrematheism. Several hymns are addressed, not to natural forces, but to

[1] *Classical Studies in Honour of Drisler*, pp. 75 ff.

inanimate and material objects. "Prayers are made to the mountains; hymns to the plough and the press-stones; arms and weapons are invoked in song. As portions of this divine material world, ethereal objects were also felt to be divine; and, as the spiritual power behind material rose into prominence, the moving forces and elements, whether visible or not, were regarded as personal powers." It is the expressed belief of the Ṛgveda that "there is but one spirituality in all the gods, and that everything is one." How far back this reaches the philosophical side of growing pantheism it is difficult to say. But it is certain that forces which originally were thought to be distinct are considered to be identical powers under different names. Thus, the Sun-fire, the lightning-fire are considered identical, and both with the sacrificial-fire. And, Indra, the spirit behind lightning, is identified with the Sun.

It may thus be supposed that "polytheism with an accompaniment of half-acknowledged chrematheism passed first into the belief that several divinities were ultimately and essentially but one, which may be described as homotheism. . . . Every hymn of the Ṛgveda seems to have been composed under the influence of that unification of deities and tendency to a quasi-monotheism, which eventually results in philosophical pantheism and in the recognition at the same time of a personal first cause. And, to distinguish the Vedic polytheism from the Hellenic, the former should be called by a name like "Pantheistic Polytheism" rather than by the somewhat misleading term like Henotheism, for what is novel here is that it "represents the fading of pure polytheism and the engrafting, upon a polytheistic stock, of a speculative homoousian tendency soon to bud out as philosophic pantheism."

These are the different names given by modern scholars to designate the religion of the Ṛgveda. It is difficult to say that any of them is quite right or wrong in the view propounded by him. In the RV., it is possible to find the characteristics of Animism, Naturalism, Polytheism, Monotheism, Pantheism, Henotheism, and even Kathenotheism. The Vedic people worshipped no single deity ; hymns of praise are addressed in the Veda to numerous deities such as fire, wind, water, rain and presiding deities of natural phenomena, and to gods like Yama, Indra, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, and Bṛhaspati. That these Aryans worshipped natural phenomena entitles us to call their religion *Naturalism*, while the fact that they worshipped more than one deity should make *Polytheism* the religion. The spirits of deceased ancestors come in for a large share of worship, so that *Animism* should also be a characteristic of Vedic religion. It is only the apparent polytheism of the Veda that later developed slowly into the *Monotheism* which later expressed itself in such terms as that there is only *one* God, and the numerous gods who are enumerated are mere names and but phases of Him. In the hymns themselves it is possible to see monistic tendencies tending towards simplification of the polytheistic pantheon.[1] Numerous are the hymns in the RV. which are panegyrical in character wherein a particular divinity is praised with a view to securing its favour. It is quite natural that in the course of such laudations, the bounds which limit the achievements of one particular divinity are transgressed, and qualities and accomplishments which belong to other gods are ascribed to the god who forms the theme of a particular eulogy. Strict lines of demarcation between the personalities tend thus to be obliterated, and the 'sphere of one divinity becomes merged in that of others.' In the

[1] H. Oertel, *Oriental Studies in Honour of C. E. Pavry*, pp. 353 ff.

course of this process the god who is eulogized on a particular occasion may either be compared with other divinites, or even identified with them. Agni is thus said to illumine with his brilliant rays heaven and earth like Sūrya (RV. VI. 4. 6). Indra who, through his might, is rich in rain like Parjanya, is strengthened by Vatsa's hymns (RV. VIII. 6. 1). Agni when being generated is Varuṇa, Mitra when kindled, and Indra for the devotee who serves him with gifts (RV. V. 3. 1). It is true that these identifications are 'really rhetorical devices rather than the considered expression of religious concepts,' but still it should be conceded that they prepare the way for those speculations which seek unity behind the multiplicity of the gods of the Indian pantheon. This is because there is room for no other deity in the mind of the poet when, in his devotional ecstacy, he is showering encomia on a particular god.

This fusion of individual personalities of gods could have been arrested if these gods had their own distinct individuality and character. But in the transition period from the Saṁhitās to the Brāhmaṇas, a noticeable weakening is seen in the individualization of the gods and an increasing vagueness in their characterization. With the development of the sacrificial cult, "the gods are no longer independent sovereigns who act according to their own will and pleasure, but they become more and more mere agents whose actions are no longer free but determined by the magic of the sacrifice. From being a suppliant the priest turns into a magician who through the special powers vested in him and through his special knowledge directly, by means of the sacrifice, influences the course of events. The gods are thus reduced to mere accessories of the ritual which absorbs them; their divine power is weakened to such an extent that the gods themselves must resort to the

sacrifice in order to accomplish their desires. Under such circumstances, it makes very little difference which particular god serves as agent in the performance of a given magic rite; the distinctive functions which limit the spheres of different gods fade away and the barriers which keep the divine personalities apart from one another are broken down."

In one speculative hymn, the poet asks (RV. X. 88. 18) how many Agnis, how many Sūryas and how many Dawns there are, and this query is answered in another place (RV. VII. 58. 2) where it is said that there is but one Agni though kindled in many places, one Sūrya extended over everything, one Dawn shining over all. If the different Agnis, Sūryas and Dawns are in reality only the daily manifestations of one Agni, one Sūrya, and one Dawn, it is possible[1] also to conceive similarly that the different gods of the pantheon are so many appellations of a single deity. Thus in a well-known verse of the RV. (I. 164. 46) we are told that the One God is called by different names like Agni, Yama and Mātariśvan.

We are frequently told (RV. III. 53. 8; VI. 47. 18) that many gods like Indra possess the power (*māyā*) to assume many shapes, and it is not improbable[2] that this conception later led to the identification of numerous gods in the Vedic pantheon. ***Pantheism*** is only a further development of this idea of monotheism, and came into being when the seers, no longer content with identification of the several gods, conceived of the highest God as identical with the Universe. And, when we find that, in devotional ecstacy, each god becomes supreme for the moment in the mind of the singer, we have also the element of ***Henotheism*** or ***Kathenotheism***, though later critics of Max Müller disputed the accuracy of this

[1] H. Oertel, *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[2] *Ibid.*

term in describing Vedic religion. The most prudent observation in this respect seems, therefore, to say that the Ṛgvedic religion is all these "isms", and not any one of them taken separately and exclusively.

After this discussion on the name of the Vedic religion, there remains for consideration the relation that subsisted between god and man in the Vedic period. It has often been said that man's conception of divinity depends on the attitude he has towards life. This is as much true in the case of the Vedic religion as it is with any other religion. The Vedic poets were an active, energetic people who took a healthy joy in the life they lived on earth. They craved for a long life for a full hundred years, freedom from diseases, abundance of food and drink, warlike sons and conquest of enemies, and this they got from their gods whom they worshipped with all sincerity. In this capacity the gods appear not only as protectors, but even as friends. It is no doubt true that the gods are by nature true, good, generous and ever intent on conferring blessings on mortals, but often a sort of reciprocity between the personal gods and their devotees is conspicuous. As Bloomfield[1] remarks, ". . . these priest-poets . . . asked the favour of the gods not as greedy beggars, but as joyously unconscious beneficiaries of divinities whose power to reward is incidental to their inherent generous nature, and who, therefore, present themselves as a brilliant and worthy theme of song . . . Men can subsist and prosper only if the gods return in kind. The gods, on the whole are good; they do not beat down the requests of him that comes with prayer and a cup of *soma*. Reciprocity, frank unconditional reciprocity, thus becomes an accepted motive: "Give thou to me I give to thee, is the formula."

[1] ***Religion of the Veda***, pp. 183 ff.

Some of the Vedic gods are specially recognized as protectors, and the most prominent among them is Indra who should have been recognized as the national hero of the time. Indra is the victorious warrior, mighty eater, great drinker, who by his might shakes gods and men alike. Even Heaven and Earth tremble with fear when he strikes Vṛtra with his bolt (RV. I. 80. 11; II. 11. 9; VI. 17. 9). Though he is thus terrible and not tempered, he is yet a jovial and human god who cares for his worshippers. He is their compassionate helper (RV. I. 84. 19; VIII. 55. 13; 69. 1), and their deliverer (RV. VIII. 55. 20) who kills numerous demons like Vṛtra, Ahi, Bali, Dānu, Uraṇa (RV. IV. 19. 8; II. 12. 3, 11; X. 99. 6) for their relief. He is wroth with the Panis who withhold treasures from men and gods. There are many benefits which his worshippers share (RV. VIII. 54. 7). He bestows on them goods and wealth (RV. II. 19. 4; 22. 3; III. 45. 4; VII. 27. 3). Indra is thus the "irresistible warrior whose mighty arm wins victory, whose inexhaustible liberality bestows the highest goods on mankind, and who delighting in the exhilaration of magnificent soma sacrifices, confers rich rewards on the hosts of priests officiating in his worship."

Slightly different seems to be the relation between these seers and their God Rudra[1], and, to a certain certain extent, even the Maruts who are really dreaded, unlike Indra who after all seems to have "nought of the bear but the skin." A host of malevolent traits are attributed to these gods in the Veda. Rudra is exremely strong (RV. II. 33. 3; I. 43. 1), unassailable (RV. VII. 46. 1) and unsurpassed in might (RV. II. 33. 10). He is fierce (RV. II. 33. 9, 11; X. 126. 5) and destructive like a terrible beast (RV. II. 33. 11). His beneficence

[1] For a detailed study of this god, see N. Venkataramanayya, *Rudra-Siva* (University of Madras, 1941).

is also spoken of some times (RV. I. 114. 3 ; II. 33. 7 ; VI. 49. 10), but he appears more often as a terror to his worshippers who would rather save themselves from him than hope to derive any material advantage. Prayers are addressed to Rudra to leave his devotees unharmed (RV. II. 33. 1, 6), not in his anger, to slay or injure them, their parents, children, men, cattle, or horses (RV. I. 114. 7, 8 ; II. 33. 1). He is asked to divert his bolt elsewhere, but not against his worshippers (RV. II. 33. 11, 14), who, however, are to be kept away from his cow-slaying, man-slaying missile (RV. II. 33. 1). The Maruts, who are considered to be the sons of Rudra (RV. I. 114. 6 ; II. 33. 1), are also similarly conceived as fierce (RV. I. 19. 4), irascible (RV. VII. 56. 8) and terrible (RV. VII. 58. 2). They cast down terrestrial and celestial creatures (RV. I. 64. 3), and all creatures are afraid of them (RV. I. 85. 8). They are also addressed like their father to avert from their worshippers their arrow and the stone which they hurl (RV. I. 172. 2) and their cow and man-slaying bolt (RV. VII. 56. 17). Rudra and Maruts therefore belong to the group of gods whom the Vedic poets venerated more out of fear than out of love.

In the conception of Agni, we have an entirely different atmosphere. He is the very close friend of the worshipper who is happy to own him even as a guest. Of the gods, he is the one nearest to man, and if Viṣṇu is the highest, he is the lowest (*agnir vai devānām avamo viṣṇuḥ paramaḥ*).[1] The gods, we are told, fashioned him for man (RV. X. 46. 9) and placed him among men (RV. VI. 16. 1). He is the one god to whom the epithet *gṛhapati* is frequently[2] applied. He dwells in every abode (RV. VII. 15. 2), and is consequently called domestic (*damūnas*) quite often (RV. I. 160. 4 etc.).

[1] *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, I. 1.

[2] RV. I. 12. 6; 36. 5; II. 1. 2; IV. 9. 4; VI. 15. 3.

He is also the guest (*atithi*) in every house (RV. X. 91. 2), the first guest of settlers (RV. V. 8. 2). Having been thus domesticated, he is a leader (RV. III. 2. 5) and protector of settlers (RV. I. 96. 4). He is even called the nearest kinsman of man (RV. VII. 15. 1; VIII. 49. 10), or a friend (RV. I. 75. 4). Agni is often described as a father (RV. VI. 1. 5), as a brother (RV. VIII. 43. 16), and even as a son (RV. II. 1. 9) or mother (RV. VI. 1. 5) of his worshippers. Agni then belongs to the class of gods with whom the poets were at home, and whom they worshipped out of mere friendship and love.

There are also gods like Varuṇa who appear as judges of the morality of men,[1] who appoint spies to watch the conduct of men and punish the wrong-doer. Varuṇa is the lord of order (*ṛta*), is its guardian (*ṛtasya gopā*). He is also called *ṛtavān*, 'observer of order.' His wrath is roused by sin which amounts to infringement of his order, and he severely punishes (RV. VII. 86. 3, 4) the offender. He is said to bind sinners with fetters (*pāśa*) (RV. I. 24. 15; VI. 74. 4; X. 85. 24). He is also a dispeller, hater and punisher of falsehood (RV. I. 152. 1; VII. 60. 5; 66. 13), and afflicts with disease those that neglect his worship (RV. I. 122. 9). Other gods like Mitra, Savitṛ, the Ādityas and the goddesses Aditi and Uṣas also appear in this capacity as upholders of the moral law and as chastisers of the offenders. But none of these divinities are devoid of the quality of mercy. Varuṇa, we are thus told, is always gracious to those who have broken his laws by thoughtlessness (RV. VII. 89. 5). Gracious to the penitent, he unties like a rope and removes sin (RV. II. 28. 5; V. 85. 7, 8), and spares the suppliant who daily transgresses his laws (RV. I. 25. 1). Varuṇa is therefore a god who is 'just yet merciful, a judge but yet a father', and he is only

[1] A separate section has been devoted below to the elaboration of this theme.

representative of the Vedic gods who appear with him as moral governors. Varuṇa, and those gods belonging to his class are those who are respected but not dreaded. The sinner might be afraid of them, but, once he is absolved, he is looked upon even like a friend by these great gods (RV. VII. 88. 4-6; I. 25. 18).

There are a few gods in the Vedic pantheon who continue their connection with the Vedic seers even after the latter die. Among these, the first consideration should naturally be given to Agni who, in his capacity as the funeral fire, conducts the the dead to the other world, the fathers and the gods (RV. X. 16. 1-4; 17. 3). According to the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (XVIII. 51 ff.) Agni, the divine bird is the medium through which men go 'to the highest place of the sun, to the highest heaven, to the world of the righteous, whither the ancient, earliest-born seers have gone.' The way to the heaven-world is distant, and consequently perhaps dangerous also. Pūṣan is thus said to protect the dead who move that way, and Savitṛ conducts them (RV. X. 17. 4.) The Maruts also help in conducting the dead man to the abode of Yama (AV. XVIII. 2. 22). The connection of Soma with the dead man consists in his capacity to heal any injury that bird, beast, ant, or serpent may have inflicted on his body (RV. X. 16. 6). In the world of Yama, to which the deceased goes, there is also Varuṇa to be found who, along with Yama, gives his company to the mortals who reach that world (RV. X. 14. 7). The most important of all these gods is Viṣṇu whose highest heaven (*parama pada*) forms the asylum for the pious (*sūri*) among the dead (RV. I. 22. 20, 21; 154. 5).

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CHAPTER VII

SŪKTABHĀJAḤ AND HAVIRBHĀJAḤ

LESS known than the traditional method of classification of the Vedic gods into Terrestrial (*pṛthivīsthāna*), Atmospheric (*antarikṣasthāna*) and Celestial (*dyusthāna*), but nevertheless quite important, is the *rationale* which attempts to group them under *two* heads, those that receive hymn or praise (*sūkta* or *stuti*) and those that receive oblation (*havis*) or *soma*; the former method has been found to be fairly free from all "Fallacies of Division"[1] and has, as such, met with wide approval. Though it is usually associated with

[1] Macdonell (*Vedic Mythology*, p. 19 ff.) points out that though it is possible to classify the gods in several other ways also, none of the methods are as satisfactory as Yāska's; the attempt to classify the gods according to their relative greatness *i e.*, great, small, young and old, is a very doubtful test; the *relative age* of the mythological conception fails as a satisfactory *fundamentum divisionis* because it is not possible to say with certainty how many gods beside *Dyaus* belong to the Indo-European period; and the *stage of personification* represented by the various deities could be a successful basis for classification only if it were possible to draw a strict line of demarcation between one another. Macdonell hence concludes that the classification open to the least objection is that suggested in the RV. itself and followed by its oldest commentator, Yāska. But one cannot help observing that even Yāska's method is not *entirely* satisfactory. The mention of gods and goddesses like *Savitṛ*, *Varuna*, *Yama*, *Uṣas* and *Pṛthivī* in more than one group or in all of them, shows beyond doubt that the *rationale* is not accurate, and that it is open to the "Fallacy of Cross Division." Several explanations are offered by Yāska and Durga, his commentator, to justify this recurrence, but the explanations do not justify the *rationale*, however much they may convince one of the necessity to include the name of a god or a goddess in more than one group. Bloomfield (*Religion of the Veda*, p. 91 ff.) is conscious of this defect in Yaska's method, and hence expounds his own of *Transparent*, *Translucent* and *Opaque* gods; but even his method suffers from being highly subjective in character.

the name of Yāska, he cannot be regarded as its originator, for it it is possible to see that it was known long before him and that his task has been only to systematize and regulate a method which existed before him. The RV. (I. 139. 11) thus speaks of eleven of the gods as living in Heaven, but specifies no number of the gods that live in each sphere. The etymologists who lived long before Yāska[1] believed in the existence of only *three* deities, Agni on Earth, Vāyu or Indra in the Air, and Sūrya in Heaven. Each of these receives many appellations either on account of his super-eminence or according to differences of function, just as the same person may act in the capacities of the *Hotṛ*, the *Adhvaryu*, the *Udgātṛ* and the *Brahman*. Yāska does not consider it necessary to hold that the various gods are but different forms or manifestations of these three representative deities, but allows also the possibility that those forming each of the three groups may be allied in sphere (*saṁsthānaikatva*) and functions (*sambhogaikatva*). For the three representative deities mentioned before, there are also the respective shares and companions;[2] *Agni* has thus for his share this world, the morning libation, spring, the *gāyatrī* metre etc.; he is jointly praised with Indra, Soma, Varuṇa, Parjanya, and the Ṛtavaḥ, while *Indra* has for his companions Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, Pūṣan, Bṛhaspati, Brahmaṇaspati, Parvata, Kutsa, Viṣṇu and Vāyu.

The *fundamentum divisionis* of the latter method which is at present taken up for consideration, cannot claim the same merit as the former. What strikes one at the very

[1] *Nirukta*, VII. 5; they were influenced, perhaps, by passages like RV. X. 158. 1 where *Sūrya* is requested to protect his devotees from Heaven, *Vāta* from Air, and *Agni* from the earthly regions; cf. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[2] For a description of this in detail, see *Nirukta*, VII. 8 ff.

outset is that Yāska himself has not paid adequate attention to make the division perfect;[1] he seems to be content with pointing out that while some Terrestrial gods are offered both praise and oblation, some receive only praise; he mentions[2] only *four* of the Atmospheric gods as belonging to the latter category, though on closer examination it is possible to find more; and as regards the Celestial deities, he mentions them all in a mess as though they all belong to one class, while it is easily seen that though the vast majority of them receive praise only, a good many are offered sacrificial food (*havis* or the libation of *soma*).

Moreover, there are a good number of gods to whom only verses or half-verses are addressed, and a good number are mentioned only incidentally (*nipāta*);[3] some are there whose name is announced by the seer at the time of offering the oblation, and some whose distinctive activities (*karma*) are praised. Yāska does not find it necessary to make separate lists of all these kinds of gods.[4] He enlists all those appellations

[1] The *Bṛhaddevatā* (VIII. 125 ff.) also makes an attempt at this classification and, on examination, the account given here seems to be as confused and inadequate as the one found in the *Nirukta*. The author of the *Bṛhaddevatā* himself seems to be well aware of this, for he says that no one who is not a seer can hope to know a *mantra* by direct perception :

anukrāntā devatās sūktabhājo havirbhājas cobhayathā nipātaiḥ |
apyevaṁ syād ubhayathānyathā vā na pratyakṣam anṛṣer asti mantram ||

For the classification of deities according to the *Bṛhaddevatā*, see *Appendix B*. The *Devatānukramaṇī* of Mādhavabhaṭṭa classifies the gods into Visible (*pratyakṣa*) and Invisible (*parokṣa*); the former are worshipped by visible rites, and to this group belong gods like *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Sūrya*; *Sarasvatī*, *Manyu*, *Soma* and others belonging to the latter variety are offered worship by invisible rites, and they are also hence invisible (*parokṣāḥ*) [*Ṛgvedānukramaṇī* of Mādhavabhaṭṭa, Ed. by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, p. 55].

[2] *Nirukta*, X. 42.

[3] cf *Brhaddevatā*, I. 17; VIII. 129. Strictly speaking this cannot be an independent group, for it is quite possible that a deity which may be incidentally mentioned in one group may receive praise or offering when enumerated in another group. Thus, though *Pṛthivī* is incidentally mentioned among celestial gods, as an atmospheric deity, she receives offering (see *Appendix* A).

[4] cf. *Ibid.*, II. 71 for the same view.

which have become conventional and with reference to which chief praise is addressed to the deity,[1] but all epithets alluding to the distinctive activity (*karma*) of a deity are omitted by him, because these are only indications of a particular aspect of the proper appellations. However convincing this reasoning of Yāska may be, all these anomalous instances do argue for the inefficacy of this *rationale* when used to classify the entire Vedic pantheon.

Nor is this the ambition of Yāska, for he seems to be satisfied with the utility of this *fundamentum divisionis* in an attempt at a further sub-division of the gods, classified by him already under the three major heads, taking into account their individual location.

Of the *fifty-two* Terrestrial deities recorded in the *Nighaṇṭu* (Chap. V), *Agni*, the *thirteen* beginning with *Draviṇodāḥ*, *Agnāyī*, *Devī Joṣṭrī*, and *Devī Ūrjāhutī* receive both praise as well as oblation, but the remaining *thirty-three* beginning with *As'va*[2] receive only praise (*stuti*); the Atmospheric deities[3] mentioned are *sixty-eight* in number, and Yāska arranges them into three groups, single deities, groups of deities (*devagaṇāḥ*), and goddesses (*striyaḥ*); the single deities are *thirty-nine* in number; there are *eight* groups of gods and there are *twenty-one* goddesses; among the single deities, the following *eleven*, viz. *Vena*, *Asunīti*, *Ṛta*, *Indu*, *Ahi*, *Ahirbudhnya*, *Suparṇa*, *Purūravas*, *Soma*, *Candramas* and *Dhātṛ*, receive only praise (*stuti*); of the remaining *twenty-eight*, the first *twenty-three* beginning with *Vāyu* and ending with *Agni*, and *Prajāpati* receive both oblation and praise; *S'yena* and *Mṛtyu* receive the *soma* libation; *Vis'vānara* is

[1] The same view is reiterated in the *Bṛhaddevatā*, I. 86-88.

[2] Among these *Narās'aṁsa* is mentioned in the previous group as receiving *havis* also.

[3] *Nighaṇṭu*, Chap. V.

only another form of the Terrestrial god who receives both oblation and praise; *Vidhātṛ* is mentioned only incidentally. Of the *eight* groups of deities (*devagaṇa*), the first *seven* beginning with *Maruts* and ending with the *Bhṛgus* receive only praise,[1] and the *Āptyas* are mentioned only incidentally; of the *twenty-one* goddesses, *Sarasvatī*,[2] *Sinīvālī* and *Kuhū*, and *Indrāṇī*[3] receive oblation and *soma* respectively, and *Pṛthivī* is only a form of the *Pṛthivī*, mentioned among the Terrestrial deities as a receiver of praise (*stuti*) only; the remaining *sixteen* receive only praise (*stuti*).

Regarding the Celestial deities who are *thirty-one* in number,[4] Yāska by himself makes no distinctions among them; but it does not follow from that that they are all uniform in character; a good many of them are already mentioned in the earlier groups; some of them drink *soma* in place of oblation, some get both, and some are mentioned only incidentally.

Tvaṣṭṛ,[5] *Viśvānara*[6] and *Pṛthivī*[7] are mentioned as existing in all the three regions; *Uṣas*, by herself, is both a Celestial and an Atmospheric deity and, when coupled with

[1] This is according to the description given by Yāska in his *Nirukta*; but from descriptions of these gods found elsewhere in the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, it is seen that they all receive *soma*, and oblation accompanied by the call *svadhā*.

[2] RV. I. 3. 10 which is cited by the *Nirukta* (XI. 26) as a typical address to *Sarasvatī*, only asks her 'to like the sacrifice' (*yajñam vaṣṭu*) offered to her; though the exact nature of the offering, *i.e. havis* or *soma*, is not clear, it is obvious that *Sarasvatī* receives some offering.

[3] Though as an atmospheric deity, *Indrāṇī* is described by Yāska (*Nirukta*, XI. 37 ff.) as one who receives praise only, it is known from a verse elsewhere in the RV. (I. 22. 12) that she receives the *soma* libation.

[4] *Nighaṇṭu*. loc. cit.

[5] Among celestial gods, *Tvaṣṭṛ* is mentioned only incidentally, but in the other two planes he represents forms of Agni (*Nirukta*, VIII. 14 f.; X. 34; XII. 11).

[6] In the celestial sphere, *Viśvānara* is incidental, and in the other two spheres he means forms of Agni (*Nirukta*, VII. 31; XI. 9; XII. 21).

[7] *Pṛthivī* in the celestial plane is only incidental (*Ibid.*, IX. 32; XI. 37; XII. 31).

Naktā (Night) is a Terrestrial deity also;[1] *Agni* is both Terrestrial and Atmospheric, while *Savitṛ*, *Varuṇa*, *Yama* and *Atharvan* are both Celestial and Atmospheric;[2] and among the wives of the gods (*devapatnyaḥ*) mentioned in the list of the Celestial deities, *Agnāyī* is mentioned earlier as a Terrestrial deity, and *Indrāṇī* and *Rodasī* as Atmospheric deities; also, while the *Ādityas* receive oblation, the *As'vins*, the *Vis'vedevāḥ*, *Yama* and *Devapatnyaḥ* receive *soma*, and the *Vasus* get both oblation and soma; *Tvaṣṭṛ*, *Vis'vānara*, *Aja Ekapād*, *Pṛthivī*, *Samudra*, *Atharvan*, *Manu* and *Dadhyañ* are mentioned incidentally; the remaining celestial gods receive praise only.

So much for the classification of the Vedic deities in accordance with the nature of the offering they receive from their worshippers. A careful study of it reveals several individual characteristics which distinguish one deity or a group of them from the rest of the pantheon. Judging thus from the standpoint of location, it is easily understood that the atmospheric deities are superior in status to those belonging to the terrestrial region, and that the celestial deities are, in their turn, not only superior to those belonging to the atmospheric region, but also are the most dignified; the vast majority of these celestial deities receive, as can be noticed from the table at the end,[3] only praise; only a very small minority receives any offering, so that receiving only praise

[1] *Uṣas* of the celestial plane is derived from *vas'*, 'to desire', while she of the atmospheric plane is derived from *vas*, 'to shine'; when coupled with *Naktā* in the terrestrial plane, she receives oblation also besides praise (*op. cit.*, VIII. 11; XI. 47 f.; XII. 5).

[2] *Savitṛ* and *Varuṇa* represent the visible Sun when they are atmospheric, and the invisible aspect of him when on the celestial plane; as a celestial god, *Yama* gets *soma*, and *havis* only as an atmospheric god; *Atharvan* is incidentally mentioned among celestial gods (*op. cit.*, X. 32. 4 f.; XII. 12. 21 f.; X. 19; XII. 29, 33).

[3] See *Appendix* A.

(*stuti*) can be regarded as *one of the qualifications associated with a superior deity*; also, of the celestial deities that receive any offering, the majority of them take *soma*, while oblation (*havis*) is received by an almost negligible minority. Receipt of *soma* instead of *havis* is hence *another qualification associated with a superior deity.*

Now these canons will be of great help in understanding the difference in dignity on the one hand, between the several kinds of *manes* and the *gods*, and on the other hand, between the *gods* themselves, especially between those gods who are important in the study of the eschatological conceptions of the Vedic people.

The association of deities with only *stuti* need not in itself signify greater eminence. *Havis* is essentially a factor in sacrifices, and as such must naturally be associated with such deities as are intimately connected with sacrifices. It is not all the deities that are invoked to the sacrifice to partake of the oblation. There are many deities who are not invoked to the sacrifices, who do not partake of the offerings given at the sacrifices, but who yet receive praises which are sent up to them. What can therefore be said is that the gods of the terrestrial and atmospheric regions are more connected with the sacrifice and are as such mostly *havirbhājaḥ*, while the gods of the celestial region have no such intimate connection with sacrifices.

Under the group of *manes* come the *Maruts*, the *Ṛbhus*, the *Aṅgirases*, the *Pitṛs*, the *Atharvans* and the *Bhṛgus*, and perhaps the *Rudras* also on account of their close association with the *Maruts*. In the *Nirukta* these are all mentioned under groups of gods (*devagaṇa*), but an examination of their nature[1] reveals that they are no more than *manes*, though

[1] For an exhaustive study, see *supra*, pp. 61 ff.

superior to the ordinary class of them because of their special distinctions.

The *Maruts* are of dubious parentage; not merely are they called sons of Rudra (II. 33. 1),[1] or of Pṛṣṇi (I. 23. 10) or of Sindhu (X. 78. 6), but are also styled often as self-born (I. 168. 2). Very often they are called priests (V. 29. 3) or are compared with them (X. 78. 1), and one passage in the RV. (I. 85. 7) says that they obtained a dwelling in Heaven through their greatness (*tavas*). It is clear from these factors that their individual merit was responsible for their rise from priesthood to divinity.

Though originally mortals, the *Ṛbhus*, children of Manu,[2] acquired immortality by reason of their feats (III. 60. 3). They are also said to have mounted to Heaven (I. 110. 6) and to have obtained the friendship of the gods (IV. 36. 4), with the result that they are often even expressly invoked as gods (IV. 37. 1).

The *Aṅgirases* derive their appellation from *Aṅgiras* one of the earliest ancestors of the Vedic people, who, by his special merit, achieved immortality.[3]

The *Pitṛs* are the virtuous ancestors of the Vedic seers whose virtuous life on earth allowed them to enter the Heaven of Yama for enjoyment in his company. The term can also be taken as generic, denoting all the varieties of ancestors, whether they are of superior merit or of merit which is only up to the mark, for we hear once that there are *three* varieties of these fathers (*pitaraḥ*), high, middle and low (X. 15. 1).

[1] Unless specified otherwise, citations like these in this section refer only to the *Ṛgveda*.

[2] They are also often sons of *Sudhanvan* (I. 110. 4).

[3] For a fuller account of the *Aṅgirases*, see *supra*, pp. 65 ff.

Along with the *Aṅgirases*, *Navagvas* and the *Bhṛgus*, the *Atharvans* are also enumerated as fathers in one verse of the Ṛgveda (X. 14. 6). They are said to have established the order of sacrifices (X. 92. 10), and by the merit acquired by performance of feats like these they were able to be relatives of the gods (AV. IV. 1. 7), and to dwell in Heaven (AV. XI. 6. 13). Like the *Atharvans*, the *Bhṛgus* came to be esteemed as gods on demonstration of their skill (X. 92. 10).

This entire group of manes of whom detailed descriptions have already been given, belongs to the atmospheric region (*madhyasthāna*). From the point of view of position, it may seem that the manes, the above *devagaṇas*, are more eminent than the terrestrial gods like Agni. In so far as they receive only praise and not *havis* or *soma* (except in a very few cases), it would appear that they are superior to the terrestrial gods, and also to the atmospheric gods who are partakers of *havis*. But it has already been indicated above that receiving only praise is a feature associated with the gods of a higher status, but need not in itself be a feature constituting that higher status. The distinction between *sūktabhājaḥ* and *havirbhājaḥ* comes in only from the degree of intimate relation, and if these *devagaṇas* do not receive *havis* but only praise, it only shows that they are not gods invoked to sacrifices to partake of offerings.

Yāska's description of these makes one feel that they receive only praise (*stuti*), but from abundant descriptions of them found elsewhere in the Ṛgveda, it is obvious that they all receive *svadhā* and *soma*, and that some of them even rejoice in the call *svāhā* like the gods (X. 14. 3). As a class, therefore, they must all be inferior to the celestial deities, particularly to those of them that receive *praise* only. A gradation among these fathers is made sometimes (X. 15. 1),

and this distinction will also be obvious on application of the test to each one of the varieties to see whether they receive mere oblation or *soma* also.

According to the account given of *Yama* in the Veda, he is no more than the first mortal who after death found out the path for those that went after him (X. 14. 2). Naturally, Yama must hence be regarded as one among the fathers. The present test also proves that he is so. Yama is a deity of the atmospheric region,[1] and like them, he receives oblation (*svadhā*). True that his name is found also in the list of the celestial deities.[2] Yāska and Durga explain[3] this by saying that the *atmospheric* Yama refers to Yama, king of the dead, and that the *celestial* Yama is none else than the setting Sun. Though Yāska and his commentator try to explain the obvious difficulty by accepting *two* Yamas, it is also possible to accept a *single* Yama and explain the phenomenon of his double occurrence by saying that the dual mention of Yama among the atmospheric deities as well as among those belonging to the celestial region, is only to show that he is superior to the rest of the fathers (*pitaraḥ*). That Yama should be a celestial god, at least in part, is proof enough that he is superior to the rest of the fathers who are essentially atmospheric. As the first of the mortals to find out the "path," as the king and assembler (*saṅgamanaṁ janānām*)[4] of the dead in Heaven, Yama must certainly be supreme among those of his class, and the description that, in his celestial capacity, he drinks *soma*[5] is only another factor proving his superiority at least over the ordinary manes who receive only oblation (***havis***).

[1] See *Appendix A*.

[2] *Ibid*

[3] *Nirukta*, XII. 29, and Durga's commentary thereon.

[4] RV. X. 14. 1.

[5] RV. X. 135. 1; *Nirukta*, XII. 29.

Varuṇa is described as the companion of Yama in the merriment of the latter in his Heaven (X. 14. 7), and it is gratifying to see that the application of the present test shows Varuṇa to be possessed of all the privileges to which Yama is entitled. Like Yama, Varuṇa also is partially atmospheric and partially celestial,[1] and receives oblation (*havis*)[2] as a deity of the atmospheric region ; but while Yama gets *soma* in his celestial capacity, Varuṇa then receives praise (*stuti*), and this is proof that the latter is superior in status even to the former. This fact is well-known for, in the whole of the Ṛgveda, Yama is only called king (*rājā*) but never a god, while Varuṇa is honoured with the latter appellation also most frequently, especially when these two are mentioned together (*ubhā rājānā svadhayā madantā yamaṁ paśyāsi varuṇaṁ ca devam*).[3]

The present test applied to *Viṣṇu* reveals him as the supreme deity in the Vedic pantheon, superior not only to the fathers (*pitaraḥ*) but also to Yama and Varuṇa ; as one who lives essentially in the celestial plane, Viṣṇu is certainly higher in status than Varuṇa or Yama who are partially atmospheric also ; and as one who receives praise (*stuti*) and nothing more, he is again superior to Yama who is entitled to no praise,[4] and to Varuṇa who, besides praise, receives oblation and a libation of *soma* also.

Savitṛ, *Pūṣan* and *Sūrya* are three more celestial deities who need be considered at present ; the last two are described in their solar capacity and, like Viṣṇu, receive only praise. These can thus be regarded as on an equal footing with

[1] See *Appendix* A.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] RV. X. 14. 7 cd.

[4] As a celestial god Yama gets *soma*, while he gets *havis* only in the atmospheric plane (See *supra*, p. 131 n.)

Viṣṇu. But though Savitṛ is solar in nature and receives praise only in his celestial capacity, as an atmospheric deity he receives oblation. Yāska and his commentator, Durga, explain [1] this dual personality of Savitṛ by saying that, in his atmospheric and celestial capacities, he represents respectively the visible and invisible aspects of the Sun. In point of status, therefore, Savitṛ is on a par with Varuṇa, though both these in their celestial character belong to the same category as Viṣṇu *i.e.*, the solar group. Durga seems also to recognize this fact for, in explaining the dual aspect of both these divinities, the same explanation is offered by him in both cases.[2]

Also, *Indu*, *Soma* and *Candramas* are three lunar deities belonging to the atmospheric region, and they receive praise (*stuti*) only; and *Mṛtyu* another god of the same region receives the libation of *soma*. Can we see adumbrated in these data the later Upaniṣadic idea of the Moon being the destination of ordinary mortals, an inferior destination as compared with the destination of those of superior merit who travel further by the bright solar path, never more to return to earth? Being an atmospheric deity entirely, the Moon, though superior to terrestrial deities, is without doubt inferior to Viṣṇu, Sūrya and other solar deities who belong to the celestial region; and if the connection of Mṛtyu (Death) with Soma, an aspect of the Moon, could be understood also to mean the close relation between mortality and the Moon, we have here much of the material which found full formation and development later in the Upaniṣadic period and went by the name of the *Pitṛyāṇa* or the *Dhūmamārga*, the path which

[1] *Nirukta*, XII. 12, and Durga's gloss thereon.

[2] Durga on *Nirukta*, XII. 12 and 21; Yāska also seems to hold the same view, but he has said nothing quite explicitly.

belongs to those subject to recurrent birth and death and which terminates at the Moon, as contrasted with the *Devayāna* or the *Arcirādimārga*, the path which belongs to those that proceed further, never more return to their earthly home, and which is closely connected with the Sun. That the lunar deities *Indu*, *Soma*, and *Candramas*, should receive *praise* only like the solar deities, *Viṣṇu*, *Pūṣan* and *Sūrya*, should entitle the former also to be a destination for ordinary people at least, even as the latter are for others who are of superior merit.[1]

Among the gods and manes noticed in the pages above, we can thus make the following distinction: *Viṣṇu*, *Pūṣan* and *Sūrya* are of the highest order, next come *Savitṛ* and *Varuṇa*, next *Yama*, next the *Ṛbhus*, *Maruts*, *Aṅgirases*, *Atharvans*, *Bhṛgus* and the *Rudras*, and lastly the fathers (*pitaraḥ*) of ordinary merit; and it should be highly refreshing to note that a study of some other characteristics also of these gods and manes forces us to arrive at the same distinction as has been posited now.

APPENDIX A

SŪKTABHĀJAḤ, HAVIRBHĀJAḤ AND NIPĀTABHĀJAḤ ACCORDING TO THE NIRUKTA

I. SŪKTABHĀJAḤ

(*a*) TERRESTRIAL DEITIES (PṚTHIVĪSTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

As'vaḥ, S'akuniḥ, Maṇḍūkāḥ, Akṣāḥ, Grāvāṇaḥ, Nārās'aṁsāḥ, Rathaḥ, Dundubhiḥ, Iṣudhiḥ, Hastaghnaḥ, Abhīs'avaḥ, Dhanuḥ, Jyā, Iṣuḥ, As'vājanī, Ulūkhalam, Vṛṣabhaḥ,

[1] For a full treatment of this subject, see *supra*, pp. 89 ff.

Drughaṇaḥ, Pituḥ, Nadyaḥ, Āpaḥ, Oṣadhayaḥ, Rātriḥ, Araṇyānī, S′raddhā, Pṛthivī, Apvā, Ulūkhalamusale, Havirdhāne, Dyāvāpṛthivī, Vipāṭ-s′utudrī, Ārtnī, and S′unāsīrau (33).

(*b*) ATMOSPHERIC DEITIES (MADHYASTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

Venaḥ, Asunītiḥ, Ṛtaḥ, Induḥ, Ahiḥ, Ahirbudhnyaḥ, Suparṇaḥ, Purūravaḥ, Somaḥ, Candramāḥ, Vis′vānaraḥ, Dhātā Marutaḥ, Rudrāḥ, Ṛbhavaḥ, Aṅgirasaḥ, Pitaraḥ, Atharvāṇaḥ, Bhṛgavaḥ, Rākā, Yamī, Ūrvas′ī, Pṛthivī, Indrāṇī, Gaurī, Gauḥ, Dhenuḥ, Aghnyā, Aditiḥ, Saramā, Vāk, Anumatiḥ, Pathyā, Svastiḥ, Uṣāḥ, Iḷā and Rodasī (37).

(*c*) CELESTIAL DEITIES (ANTARIKṢASTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

Uṣāḥ, Sūrya, Vṛṣākapāyī, Saraṇyūḥ, Savitā, Bhagaḥ, Sūryaḥ, Pūṣā, Viṣṇuḥ, Varuṇaḥ, Kes′ī, Kes′inaḥ, Vṛṣākapiḥ, Saptarṣayaḥ, Devaḥ, Sādhyāḥ, Vājinaḥ, Devapatnyaḥ (18).

II. HAVIRBHĀJAḤ

(*a*) TERRESTRIAL DEITIES (PṚTHIVĪSTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

Agniḥ, Draviṇodāḥ, Idhmaḥ, Tanūnapāt, Narās′aṁsaḥ, Iḷaḥ, Barhiḥ, Dvāraḥ, Uṣasānaktā, Daivyāhotārā, Tisro Devīḥ, Tvaṣṭā, Vanaspatiḥ, Svāhā, Kṛtayaḥ, Agnāyī, Devī Joṣṭrī, Devī Ūrjāhutī (17).

(*b*) ATMOSPHERIC DEITIES (MADHYASTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

Vāyuḥ, Varuṇaḥ, Rudrāḥ, Indraḥ, Parjanyaḥ, Brahmaṇaspatiḥ, Kṣetrasya patiḥ, Vāstoṣpatiḥ, Vācaspatiḥ, Apām napāt, Yamaḥ, Mitraḥ, Kaḥ, Sarasvān, Vis′vakarmā, Tārkṣyaḥ, Manyuḥ, Dadhikrāḥ, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā, Vātaḥ, Agniḥ, Prajāpatiḥ, Sarasvatī, Sinīvālī and Kuhū (27) ; S′yena and Mṛtyu (2) drink *soma* (29).

(c) CELESTIAL DEITIES (ANTARIKṢASTHĀNADEVATĀḤ)

Aśvinau, Yamaḥ, and Viśvedevāḥ take *soma*; Ādityāḥ take *havis*, and the Vasavaḥ take both *havis* and *soma* (5).

III. NIPĀTABHĀJAḤ

(a) TERRESTRIAL DEITIES

Jātavedāḥ and Vaiśvānaraḥ (2).

(b) ATMOSPHERIC DEITIES

Vidhātṛ and Āptyāḥ (2).

(c) CELESTIAL DEITIES

Tvaṣṭā, Viśvānaraḥ, Pṛthivī, Samudraḥ, Atharvā, Manuḥ, Dadhyaṅ and Aja Ekapād (8).

APPENDIX B

CLASSIFICATION OF VEDIC GODS ACCORDING TO THE BṚHADDEVATĀ[1]

(a) UKTAMANTRĀḤ (DEITIES WHO ARE PRAISED BY HYMNS)

Saptarṣayaḥ, Vasavaḥ, Devāḥ, Atharvāṇaḥ, Bhṛgavaḥ, Somaḥ, Sūryaḥ, Sūryā, Pathyā, Svastiḥ, Rodasī, Kuhūḥ, Guṅgūḥ, Aditiḥ, Dhenuḥ, Aghnyā, Asunītiḥ, Iḷā, Āptyā, Anumatiḥ and Aṅgirasaḥ (21).

(b) HAVIRBHĀJAḤ (DEITIES WHO OWN OBLATIONS)

Vaiśvānaraḥ, Suparṇaḥ, Vivasvat, Prajāpatiḥ, Dyauḥ, Sudhanvā, Nagohyaḥ, Apāṁ Napāt, Aryaman, Vātajūtiḥ,

[1] This classification is given in *Bṛhaddevatā*, VIII. 125-128; according to the next verse (VIII. 129), the two divisions noted above include the incidental deities (*Nipātinaḥ*) in each case.

Iḷaspatiḥ, Ṛbhavaḥ, Parjanyaḥ, Parvataḥ, Gnāḥ, Dakṣaḥ, Rathaspatiḥ, Bhagaḥ, Devapatnīḥ, Dis'aḥ, Ādityāḥ, Rudrāḥ, Pitaraḥ, and Sādhyāḥ (24).

The nature of the Vedic conception of God as such is not quite relevant to our main purpose; but what is important for consideration in this respect is the relation that existed between God and man during this period, how far the high gods helped man in life and after death. The prayers addressed to the different divinities aim, for the most part, at the attainment of some good in this life, but the point remains to be considered whether all the words denoting wealth, happiness and the like, should really be taken in their literal sense, or whether any kind of thought was given by the Vedic seers for some kind of higher happiness after death. There is no doubt whatsoever regarding the fact that the poetry of the Ṛgveda is in a sense symbolic and mystic. In the description of sacrifices, for instance, we find the symbolism of a bull, so that when the word *bull* is found, it does not mean the *actual* bull, but the more abstract sacrifice pictured in concrete terms. The same is true of *as'va* and *s'yena*, and there is no reason why words like *rayi* should not in a symbolical way refer to some higher happiness instead of mere material well-being.

And when there is such an intimate relation between the condition of the Soul, in this world and after death, and the various divinities, the enquiry naturally arises as regards the doctrine which the Vedic Aryans entertained about the nature of the gods; whether all the gods are independent or whether there is *one* Supreme God with all the other gods for his subordinates, or whether there is only *one* God of whom the individual gods are manifestations or aspects. The phenomena of what Max Müller calls Kathenotheism implies a

doctrine of *one* real God of whom the other gods are only aspects, because this justifies the description of one god after another in succession as supreme for the time being. The relation of the souls to God, how much man depended upon the gods, and how far the gods helped man in this life and after his death remains, however, what is relevant to the subject under consideration.

CHAPTER VIII

PRAYERS AND THEIR REWARDS IN THE VEDA

CLOSELY connected with the problem of the nature of the Soul is the discussion concerning the civilization of a people. If the Ṛgveda represents only what may be called a primitive state of life, it is impossible to expect any high standard of achievement either in the field of religion or in the realm of philosophy. It is difficult to analyse normally man's civilization into its materialistic and spiritual aspects, unless this be for purposes of scientific scrutiny, even as it is the case with the analysis of a sentence. A complete sentence represents a whole thought which in reality has no such divisions like subject and predicate. Yet a sentence is divided into parts like subject and predicate. Our analytical view of the spiritual and materialistic aspects of a civilization has only the same degree of validity as the analysis of a sentence. Civilization is one complete whole, and in understanding the philosophical and religious progress made by a nation, one has to examine the state of civilization prevailing in general in the nation. In the preceding sections, I have been dealing with the general content of the literature that preceded the Upaniṣads. There is also another way by which one can judge the standard of a civilization. This is by an analysis of

the vocabulary in the language of a nation. As civilization advances, ideas increase, and there is a corresponding improvement even in the vocabulary. Although the main idea may remain the same, subtle differences in meaning bring about an expansion of the vocabulary ; and such divergences do indicate a certain degree of advancement in civilization. Words change their connotation from time to time. As time passes, the same idea may be expressed by different words, or the same word may express different ideas in different contexts. In view of these considerations, it is possible to rely on the extent of vocabulary in the language of a nation in determining the standard of its civilization and the extent of its progress. In a primitive society, man's wants are few, his ambitions limited, and his prayers to the powers above him will consequently be confined to a narrow range. It is only when the nation progresses in civilization that knowledge increases, wants become manifold, ambition grows higher, and what is solicited of the gods in the course of prayers grows in volume as well as in variety. Viewed from this standpoint, a comprehensive analysis of the contents of the Ṛgveda will be of real value in the understanding of the conception of the Soul according to that Saṁhitā. The following is such a comprehensive analysis, though it may not lay claims for being completely exhaustive.

Rayi is one of the words which represents some benefit which the Ṛgvedic seers sought from their propitious gods. The word occurs over six hundred times in the RV. in such forms as *Rayi*, *Rāy*, *Revat* and *Rāti*, and as part of compounds like *Rayivataḥ*, *Rayivṛdhaḥ*, *Rayisācaḥ*, *Bṛhadrayim*, *Maṁhayadrayim*, *Rāyaḥkāmaḥ*, *Rātisācaḥ*, *Citrarāti*, *Vibhūtarātim*. The *Nirukta* (II. 12) derives the word from the root *rā*, 'to give'. Usually the word is understood to mean 'wealth or riches'. Taken literally this may be an aspect of material wealth.

Vasu connotes the same meaning in the Veda. It occurs over three hundred times in all in such forms as *Vasu*, *Vasya*, *Vasva* and *Vasvi*, and as part of compounds like *Vṛṣaṇvasū*, *Vājinīvasū*, *Vibhāvasuḥ*, *Puruvasuḥ*, *S'acīvasuḥ*, *Saṁvasuḥ*, *Gūrtavasuḥ*.

Dhana, *Sāti*, *Rādhas*, *Rāti*, *Bhaga*, *Bhagatti*, *Rekṇa*, *Vārya*, *Dyumna*, *S'rī*, *Nidhi*, *Nireka*, *Abhva*, *Artha*, *Bhāga*, *Yoga*, *Draviṇa*, *Savya*, *Prasava*. *Varivas*, *Manma*, *Vāra*, *Veda*, *Sumna*, *Gaya*, *Magha*, *Vara*, *S'ulka*, *S'ruṣṭi*, *Raghu*, *Arya*, *Grābha*, *Svas*, *Sudhita*, *Nṛmṇa*, *Deṣṇa*, *Ukthya*, *Ī*, *Paṇya*, *Tana*, and *Indriya* are other words which are used very frequently in the Veda to mean 'riches or wealth' in general.

S'ravas which occurs over one hundred times in the Ṛgveda and is often used to mean 'wealth or riches', more frequently designates 'food'. So does *Kṣatra* which in its more than fifty occurrences in the Veda more often means 'bodily strength' than 'wealth' of any kind.

Varūtha and *Gotra* are two other words which sometimes mean 'riches or wealth'. The former of the two more usually means 'a dwelling', while the latter is used abundantly in the sense of 'cow' or 'cloud'.

The Vedic seers also specify the kinds of wealth they desired and obtained from their gods. Gold and Precious Stones seem to be very popular with them. Gold is called by such names as *Hiraṇya*, *Hiraṇyavad-vasu*, *Hiraṇyakalas'a*, *Haris'rī* and *Pis'aṅga*, while Precious Stones were called *Ratna* or *Ratnadheya*. The seers seem also to have been fond of personal decorations like dress and ornament. These also they seek from their gods who are propitious towards them. Among the ornaments they sought were golden-ear-rings (*Hiraṇyakarṇam* = "having a gold ear-ring") and

jewel-necklaces (*Maṇigrīvam* = "having a jewel necklace"). *Vastra* is the term generally used to signify 'gorgeous dress'.

Kine and flocks of sheep formed a major part of the requirements of the Vedic people. The sheep is generally designated *Avi*, while the cow was called by such names as *Catuṣpāt*, *S'ata*, *S'atagvina*, *Sahasra* and *Yūtha*.

Engaged as these people were in incessant wars, it is not strange that; of their gods, they should solicit horses and chariots which they could use in their warfare, weapons which they could wield on such occasions, and strength both to withstand the enemy as well as to crush him. The 'horse' is called by such names as *As'va*, *Atya*, *Arvat*, *Etas*, and *Sapti*. The word *Vāja* which occurs nearly four hundred times in the Ṛgveda also means 'horse', but it is often used to designate 'strength', 'food' etc. *Ratha* is the term by which the 'chariot' is designated in the Veda. This word occurs over six hundred times in the Ṛgveda in such forms as *Ratha*, *Rathi*, and *Rathya*, and as part of compounds like *Surathāsaḥ*, *Rathītamaḥ*, *Rathasaṅge*, *Pururathaḥ*, *Rathayujam*, and *Rathaspatiḥ*.

The weapons which the Vedic seers used seems to be of two kinds, those used for defence and those for offence; the former is called by the name *Varma*, while *Āyudha* signifies that belonging to the latter category. The word *Aṁsatra* sometimes means 'armour', though it means 'strength' also.

'Strength' is denoted by such terms as *Dakṣa*, *Vīrya*, *Bala*, *Varcas*, *Tviṣa(ṣi)*, *Ama*, *Retas*, *Tavas*, *Mahīyas*, *Rabhyas*, *Ojas*, *S'is'*, *S'ak*, *Tṛ*, *Yāt*, *Bṛh*, *Prath*, *Vṛ*, *Sah*, *Aṁsatra*, *Pāja*, *Rabhas*, *S'uṣma*, *S'avas*, *Yas'as*, *Dyumna*, *Kṣatra*, *Ūrja*, *Pauṁsya*, *Kṛtti*, *Vṛjana (jina)*, *S'aurya*, *S'ardha*, *Ugra* and *Mahas*. *Nṛmṇa*, a word of frequent occurrence in the Ṛgveda, also signifies 'strength', but it also means 'wealth' in many a context. So also though *S'ravas* should sometimes

be taken in the sense of 'strength', it has more often the sense of 'food', and often means 'wealth' even.

The desire for wealth of offspring which is one of the major boons that the seers frequently sought from their gods, is only intimately connected with the idea of the conquest of enemies. These seers sought for an unlimited number of sons, so that with their united strength they might be able to destroy completely the hosts of their enemies. The words used in the RV. to denote the 'son' are: *Toka*, *Prajā*, *Vīra*, *Apatya*, *Tanaya*, *Sūnu*, *Sani*, *S'is'u*, *Kṛṣṭi*, and *Suputra*. The phrase *Sarvavīraṁ rayim* is often used to denote 'sons'; and this shows how much the Vedic seers valued the possession of sons. In one verse (RV. VI. 57. 7), the Maruts are said to allow the worshippers to multiply by hundreds (*s'atino vardhayanti*). This statement again shows the enthusiastic craving of the seers for sons. *Suvīrya*, a word which occurs at least eighty times, often means 'sons', but it means also 'strength' as often.

The Vedic seers not only fought with their enemies in battles, but also sought the help of the great gods in destroying them. 'Battle' is called by such names as *Samoha*, *Samarya*, *Abhīka*, *Gaviṣṭi*, *Samat*, *Pṛtana*, *Bhara*, *Hvara*, *Durga*, *Vṛjana*, and *Vāja* also signify 'battle' in some contexts, but the former term often means 'food', and the latter frequently signifies 'food' or 'horses'. *Durita* also means 'battle' sometimes, but more often it is a synonym of 'sin' or 'distress'. Among the enemies of these seers are not only 'human beings', but also 'demons' and 'spirits', and even wild animals and reptiles. To the first of these classes generally belong the aboriginal neighbours of these seers who did not respect their gods, who offered no sacrifices to them, and who were always at war with them. These are designated

by numerous names such as *Abrahmā, Brahmadviṣ, Brahma yaḥ ninitsāt, As'as, As'asti, Anṛc, Anuktha, Ye na īrayanti, Kadācana Prajigat, Asunvat, Arāti, Arāvṇa, Dureva, Apṛṇat, Anāhuti, Araruṣ, Akarman, Akratu, Ayajvan, Ayajyu, Ayajñasācin, Avrata, Anyavrata, Apavrata, Anindra, Adeva, Adevayu, Amanyamāna, Amantu, Anṛtadeva, Mūradeva, S'is'nadeva, Aghas'aṁsa, Mṛdhravāk, Droghavāk, Duskṛt, Durmatin, Kimīdin, Ripu, S'atru, Amitra, Amitrayat, Abhimāti, Abhis'asti, Ariris,Ririṣant, Aghāyat, Avapadaḥ kartā, Hiṁsra, Jighīṣat, Nid, Spṛdh, Sapatna, Sridh.* The 'demons' and 'spirits' to be saved from whom was one of the fervent prayers of the seers to the gods, were called by such generic names as *Amānuṣa, Asura, Rakṣas, Druh, Kravyāda, Bāhukṣad, Asutṛpa, Ghoracakṣas, Kṛṣṇatvak, As'ikni, Anāsa, Dasyu, Dāsa, Paṇi.* The demons are also often specified by names like *Vṛtra, Ahi, Vala, Dānu, Namuci, S'uṣṇa, Arbuda, S'ambara, Uraṇa, Svarbhānu, Pipru, Dhuni, Cumuri, Tvāṣṭra, Navavāstva, Ahīs'uva, Aurṇavābha, Dṛbhīka, Rudhikrā, Anars'aṇi, S'ṛbinda, Ilībis'a, Varcin* and *Vis'varūpa.* The wild animals which these seers dreaded are the *Vṛka* and the *Ducchuna*, and 'reptiles' are called *Ahi* or *Tsaru.*

The several devotees, no doubt, fed their gods with offerings of *havis* or *soma* in sacrifices. This does not certainly mean that the gods were incapable of getting these things for themselves. The worshippers could themselves have these things only through the good-will of the gods, and if these were offered to the gods it shows their devotion rather than the needs of these gods. This is obvious when the seers repeatedly crave from their gods the supply of some of the vital necessities of life such as food, drink, clothing and shelter. They often [1] complain of severe hunger (*Kṣut*), of the

[1] RV. VII. 1. 19; X. 33. 2.

consequent famishment (*Jasu*) and of nakedness (*Nagnatā*). The general names of food are *Prayas, Iṣa, Yava, Vaya, S'ravas, Yas'as, Cana, Pṛkṣa, Sasa, Arka, Andhas, S'romat, Bhojana, Bhoja, Bhakta, Bīja, Dyukṣa, Bhakṣa, Adatra, Anna, Odana, Bandhu, Kṣu, Dhāyas, Iḷā, Svadhā, Svadita, Bhagatti, Pitu, Vena, S'aṁsa, Ṛju, S'ruṣṭi, Pusṭhi, Poṣa. Brahma* also means 'food' very often, but more frequently it means 'prayer'. *Dyumna* which is often a synonym of 'food', also means 'strength' and 'wealth'; and *Jīva*, another synonym, is also the name of the 'individual soul'. *Arka* sometimes means 'food', but its more usual sense is the 'shining light of Heaven'. *Dakṣa, Retas* and *Varcas* are three synonyms of 'food' which occur abundantly in the sense of 'strength'. *Vāja* is the equivalent of both 'food' and 'horse'.

'Drink' in its general sense is called *Āsuti*, while milk (*Kṣīra*) and ghee (*Sarpi*) are mentioned specifically by their names. *Svaḥ* often means 'a drinkable liquid', but it sometimes means also 'riches' and most often the 'shining light of Heaven'. The seers also request their gods to supply them with *soma* [1] or *madhūdaka*.[2]

'Fields' which are cultivable and which can yield supplies are asked for by such terms as *Kṣetra, Sukṣetriya Urvarā* and *Kṣiti*. The first and last of these words often signify 'a dwelling'.

It is not enough if the gods merely supply these fields. They must also see that they are well-watered, and the Vedic seer is seen to request them to supply adequate rains from time to time. The synonyms of 'rain' in the Veda are *Vṛṣṭi, Divyakos'a, Payas* and *Āpaḥ*. The terms *Mīḷhuṣ* and *Vṛṣ*

[1] RV. IV. 32. 7.
[2] RV. IX. 67. 32.

also occur in this context, but they often signify 'showering of gifts in general'. It should be of interest in this context to note that in one verse (RV. X. 63. 15), the Maruts are asked to bless the seers with water even in desert tracts (*Dhanvasu*). The word *Dhanva* occurs six times in the Ṛgveda, and often signifies the 'bow'.

The names used to designate 'dwelling' in the Veda are *Chardi*, *Kṣaya*, *Kṣiti*, *Dama*, *Sadana*, *Varūtha*, *Okas*, *Sti*, *Astatāti*, *Dhāma*, *Sudhātu*, *Vis'*, *Saṁsat*, *Upasti*, *Svasara*, *Yoni*, *Usra*, *Kṣetra*. *Vasu*, one of the synonyms of 'dwelling', sometimes means 'food', but its more frequent signification is 'wealth'. *S'araṇa* which means 'dwelling', also means 'protection' in many contexts. *S'arma*, another term by which 'dwelling' is called, is more often a name for anything that is 'good'.

The gods have also to supply 'servants' (*Nṛ*, *Dāsa*) to look after the comforts of these seers. The latter word also means 'enemy'.

For purposes of easy and swift movements from place to place, the seers need good 'roads', and even these are expected from the bountiful gods above. The names by which the 'road' was called are *Patha*, *Gātu*, *Sugātu*, *Pada*, *Yāna* and *Sruti*.

Gods like Indra and the As'vins are also match-makers, and see that the favoured among their devotees are united with suitable wives. The Vedic synonyms for 'wife' are *Jāyā*, *Janī*, *Patnī* and *Ruṣat*(*-tī*). Names of individual maidens like *Raji* who was bestowed on *Piṭhinas*,[1] are also mentioned often.

So far specific rewards made by the Vedic seers were taken note of. Often these seers used generic terms to signify

[1] RV. VI. 26. 6.

their wants. Words like *Tuvi* and *Vṛṣ* are most important in this connection ; the former occurs at least one hundred times in the Ṛgveda, mostly as part of compounds like *Tuvijāta, Tuvidyumna, Tuvimagha, Tuvinṛmṇa,* and though its general meaning may be ' plenty ', it means, very often, as part of the first compound, some ' general good ' which the gods can do to their devotees. Similar is the case with the word *Vṛṣ* which, in its over five hundred occurrences in forms like *Vṛṣan, Vṛṣaṇa, Vṛṣabha, Vṛṣayu* and *Vṛṣamanas,* has the general meaning ' to shower ', and which, when used independently, means ' to confer some benefit '. *Dharman* is another word worth consideration in this context. It occurs about seventy times in all in the Ṛgveda, independently as well as part of compounds like *Satyadharmā, Satyadharmāṇaḥ, Vidharmaṇi* and *Vidharmaṇe.* The word very often means ' sustenance ' in general, though its usual meaning is any ' sacrificial act '.

Certain collective terms like *Idam, Abhiṣṭa(-ṣṭi), Abhīṣṭa, Dakṣiṇā, Dāna, Iṣṭa, Puru, Bhūri, Mahat* and *Bṛhat* are often used to designate the ' requirements in general ' of these seers. Without any specific mention of the object of their desire, the gods are often addressed to grant them their requests. The verbs used on such occasions are *yacch, san, makhasy, rā, pin, dhā* with *prati, cay, vah, acch, daśasy, pṛṇ.* The god who fulfils these desires is called *Draviṇodas, Dadi, Dāvan, Dāśvān, Dānaukas, Sudānu, Dāsvan, Satrādāvan, Maṁhayu, Mīḷhuṣṭama, Svarṣā, Nṛṣāk* and *Suvit.*

The following are the names used to denominate ' distress or misfortune ' from which the gods are implored to save their devotee and make him happy : *Nireka, Avarti, Durga, Bādha, Utva, Araṇa,* and *Tapa. Pāśa* and *Durita* often mean ' distress ' in general, but ' sin ' seems to be their particular signification. ' Prosperity ' was sought for in

positive terms also, and the following words used in this sense denote 'felicity,' 'happiness,' and 'protection': *S'arma, Ūti, Juṣṭi, Maya, Pras'asti, Svasti, Avas, S'am, Varūtha, S'ubha, Sva, Suga, Sugya, S'ūṣa, Hita, Saṁnyasa, Candra, Kṣema, S'akma, S'eva, S'una, Pūḥ, S'araṇa, Sumati, Rakṣa, Utsava, Suvita, Ārya, Bhoga,* and *Ka. Manma, Vasya, Sumna,* and *Narya* are also synonyms of 'wealth', besides of 'happiness'. In soliciting this 'happiness or protection', the following verbs are used: *mṛl, (-ḍ), bhuj, pā, vṛdh, s'iv, vṛ* with *ā, raṇ, ram, juṣ, mad, ind, pun, edh* and *uruṣ.*

The word *Bhadra* which occurs over one hundred and fifty times in the Ṛgveda, chiefly in the sense of 'bliss', deserves special mention in this connection, for it seems to denote 'good' which is something higher than ordinary material prosperity. The *Nirukta*[1] derives it in many ways, from the root *bhaj, dru* with *abhi, ram* with *bhū, bhand,* and *bhajana.*

The gods are not all alike. Though the vast majority of them is benevolent and generous to the suppliant devotee, there are still some among them whom the worshipper has to appease, not for any positive benefit, but to save himself from disaster which may otherwise befall him through their anger. The greatest boon that the worshipper can hope to secure from such gods is freedom from their malevolence. The words used in such supplications are *riṣ* with *mā,* and *vyath* and *bādh* with their negatives.

The interest of the gods in the welfare of their devotees does not stop with supplying them with all the necessities of life. Some of the gods like Agni, Bṛhaspati, Savitṛ, the As'vins, Ādityas, Soma and Rudra seem to possess medical skill by which they cure the ailments of their worshippers who frequently approach them with such a request. The names by

[1] IV. 10; XI. 19.

which the seers call 'disease' are *Amīva (vā)*, *Yakṣman*, *Srāma*, *Sipada*. White-leprosy seems to be known by the name *Arjuna* (RV. I. 122. 5). There are also references[1] to the Ṛbhus having rejuvenated their parents, and the As'vins, their suppliants like Kali, Cyavana and Dasra. The As'vins seem to possess much more skill in this respect than the rest of the gods, for they are able to cure defects in eye-sight, as well as to repair maimed limbs. Kaks'īvān implores[2] the As'vins to see that he passes his old-age possessed of eye-sight (*pas'yan jarimāṇaṁ jagamyām*), and glorifies them when his request is granted (RV. I. 120. 6). Ṛjrās'va, cursed by his father to become blind, was pitied by the As'vins who gave him eyes (*akṣī vicakṣe*).[3] To the blind Kāṇva, the As'vins granted eye-sight (*mahaḥ adattam*).[4] Vis'palā, wife of Khela, broke a foot in a nocturnal engagement, and the As'vins granted her an iron leg (*āyasīṁ jaṅghām adhattam*).[5] The seer Ghoṣā says (RV. I. 117. 9) that the As'vins have made whole the maimed (*srāmaṁ saṁriṇīthaḥ*). The skill of the As'vins in 'obstetrics' is shown from the report that they brought forth the sage Vāmadeva from the womb (*vipraṁ kṣetrāj janathaḥ*).[6]

Indra also seems to be versed in the cure of 'blindness' and 'lameness,' but specially, as it seems, in curing 'baldness'. Indra is described (RV. II. 13. 12) to have saved Parāvṛj from his affliction when he was blind (*andha*) and lame (*sroṇa*); and when he, pleased with Apālā who gave him plenty of *soma* to drink, asked her to name the boons she wanted, she asks for the cure of baldness which afflicted her as well as her

[1] RV. I. 20. 4; 112. 15; 116. 10; V. 74. 5; VII. 68. 6; 71. 5; X. 39. 4, 8.
[2] RV. I. 116. 25.
[3] RV. I. 116. 16; 117. 17-18.
[4] RV. I. 117. 8; VIII. 5. 23; 8. 20.
[5] RV. I. 116. 15; X. 39. 8.
[6] RV. I. 119. 7.

father (*virohaya s'iras tātasya tanvaṁ mama romas'ā kṛdhi*).[1] The same lady asks (RV. VIII. 91. 7) Indra to give her lustrous skin (*akṛṇos sūryatvacam*). This perhaps signifies Indra's capacity to cure ailments of the skin.

Agni cures affection from poison (*Vandana*, *Viṣa*) of any kind (RV. VII. 50. 2-3).

Often the gods are conceived as mere friends of the worshippers. Gods like Indra and Agni are often[2] called *Sunvatas sakhā*, *Mandayat sakhaḥ*, and *Mitra*. The seers also seek[3] the friendship (*Sakhya*) of the gods. The assistance that the gods frequently render like life-saving, helping in crossing rivers, restoration of lost property, can thus only be called friendly obligations. The story of the As'vins having saved Bhujya, son of Tugra, from being drowned in the ocean is frequently[4] told in the Ṛgveda. The As'vins are also said to have saved Dīrghatamas from a similar plight (RV. I. 158. 5). Atri is said to have been saved from flames by the As'vins who quenched it with cold water (*himenāgnim avārayethām*),[5] and from the dark cavern into which he had been thrown headlong (*ṛbīse avanītam unninyathuḥ*).[6] The same gods extricated Vandana from the well (*dars'ata*) to which he was thrown by the demons,[7] and liberated the quail from the mouth of the dog that had seized her (*āsraḥ vṛkasya vartikām amumuktam*).[8]

Protected by Indra, the Vasiṣṭhas hope to cross many rivers (*apo'titarāmasi*),[9] and the deep water of the Paruṣṇī

[1] RV. VIII. 91. 5-6.
[2] RV. I. 4. 7 ; V. 16. 1 and so on.
[3] RV. IV. 55. 3, for instance.
[4] RV. I. 116. 3-5 ; 117. 14-15 ; VI. 62. 6 ; VIII. 5. 22 ; X. 39. 4 etc.
[5] RV. I. 116. 8 ; V. 73. 7 ; X. 39. 9.
[6] RV. VII. 68. 5 ; I. 116. 8 etc.
[7] RV. I. 116. 11 , 117. 5 ; X. 39. 8.
[8] RV. I. 116. 14.
[9] RV. VII. 32. 27.

was made fordable by Indra for King Sudāsa (*gādhany akṛnot supārā*).[1]

The gods Pūṣan, Indra, and As'vins are very often[2] described as having found out lost cattle, and Indra even gets the appellation *Gaveṣaṇa* (RV. VIII. 17. 15).

Most important of the solicitations of the seers from their gods seems to be that which craves for the removal of ignorance (*Māyā, Tamas*) and for the dawn of knowledge. The word *Māyā* which occurs over eighty times in the Ṛgveda means generally the 'divine power to measure or encompass', but in certain contexts it means 'ignorance or illusion'. So also though 'darkness' is the usual meaning of *Tamas*, it also frequently means 'ignorance'. The synonyms for 'knowledge' in the Veda are *Cetana, Sumati, Dhī, Cakṣas, Jyoti, Medhas, Tejas, Mati* and *Purandhi*. On many an occasion *Kratu* and *Saumanasya* also mean 'knowledge', but the former often means 'action', and the latter also means 'concord or amity'. *Veda* is another equivalent for 'knowledge', but it also means 'wealth'. The names used in the Veda to designate the 'knower', or 'the possessor of knowledge' are *Vipra* and *Sūri*; the former of these two words occurs nearly three hundred times in the Ṛgveda, independently as well as compounded, and the latter occurs over one hundred and fifty times.

So much for the words denoting the several 'Wants or Needs' of the Vedic seers which were fulfilled by their kind and benevolent gods.

Considering the general trend of Ṛgvedic thought and Ṛgvedic poetry, it is not quite legitimate to interpret them in a very literal way. The question centres round the attitude

[1] RV. VII. 18. 5.

[2] RV. VI. 54. 10; VIII. 2. 39; 5. 26 etc.

one takes towards Vedic poetry. If we take the hymns as mere invocations to the visible aspects of nature with a view to securing the ordinary wants of life, we arrive at one conclusion. But if, on the other hand, we take the poetry of the Ṛgveda to be mystic in character, and the deities propitiated therein to be certain powers incomprehensible to the ordinary intellect, but visible only to the mystic imagination of the ṛṣis, and if we understand by the rewards prayed for in these hymns a certain higher purpose of life, we then arrive at quite a different conclusion. I think that the clue that will guide us in choosing between these alternatives lies in the Veda itself.

In respect of gods like Agni or Savitṛ, or in the case of Uṣas, a physical back-ground is more or less plain; but the association with such a physical back-ground is less plain in the case of Indra and the Maruts. It is possible to say that Indra is an atmospheric god, closely related to thunder and lightning, marking the end of summer, and heralding rain; and the association of Maruts with storm and wind is also too marked to be missed by any one. Still in the personification—and these are the best personified deities—there are so many epithets and attributes which have very little connection with the physical phenomena that is supposed to be at the back of these deities. When we come to Varuṇa and the Aśvins, the connection with a physical phenomenon becomes very difficult to trace; and, in the case of Bṛhaspati, the abstraction is complete, and it is not at all certain whether there is any physical phenomenon of which he could be a personification. If Viṣṇu can be regarded as an aspect of the solar deity, certain descriptions like his position being the highest, transcending human view and comprehensible only to the vision of the ṛṣis, show that there is an element of abstraction and idealization. It can be said of nearly every deity

appearing in the Ṛgveda that he represents something more than the mere physical phenomenon which comes within the normal experience of man. When we take up also the consideration of the benefits which the seers prayed for from the gods, there are many factors that certainly come within the day to day wants of man for his ordinary happiness, *viz.*, sons, absence of disease, long-life, destruction of enemies, food, dress, ornament, horses. Among the equivalents of 'wealth', 'strength', and 'friendship', there are many words which may mean something subtler than what they connote taken literally. Thus *Arka* and *Svaḥ* which are equivalents often of ' wealth ', also mean very often the ' shining world above ' ; and it is quite possible that words like *Tavas*, *Mahas*, *Mahīyas* and *Kṣatra* which ordinarily mean ' strength ', and the word *Sakhya* which means ' friendship ', have also a deeper meaning. There are certain words like *Gauḥ*, which mean ' cow ' as well as ' light ', and when we think of ' light ' it does not necessarily mean the ' light ' of day after dark nights, or the brightness of summer after the winter season. There is nothing to show that the Ṛgvedic Aryans prayed for the return of the summer season. On the other hand, they dreaded the draught of summer, and worshipped Indra, Parjanya and the Maruts for ' rain '. These seers prayed also for ' knowledge '. The world above is full of light ; and when these things are read together there is a natural tendency to associate the ' light ' prayed for with the ' light ' of the other world, as well as with the ' light ' of knowledge. This craving for ' knowledge ' and ' light ' is not an isolated instance in the Ṛgveda. We come across such things very frequently in the whole course of the text, and if we associate other benefits like ' wealth ' and ' strength ' with ' knowledge ' and ' light ', it would be found that what the Vedic seers prayed for is something far higher than the

physical needs of primitive man. And, if the various benefits sought for are all understood in this way, it would be found that these Vedic seers have a very advanced notion about the Soul and its needs, during this life and after death. To establish that the Ṛgvedic Aryans believed in a Soul and in its permanence, in contrast with the body that is destroyed at the time of death, it is not necessary to search for words like *Brahman* and *Ātman* and their synonyms. Nor is it proper to confine our attention to what may be called philosophical terms. It is only to point out the importance of a study of the general back-ground in the Ṛgveda, that I give above an analysis of what I may call the " Wants " of the Ṛgvedic seers, in respect of their Soul as well as of their physical existence.

CHAPTER IX

ṚGVEDA, THE SOURCE OF UPANIṢADIC PHILOSOPHY

HAVING considered so far the Vedic conception of the Soul and its relation to God, an attempt is made in the following section to show that the Upaniṣads present us with no new doctrines, and that what is contained in them is only a continuation of the ideas found in the Ṛgveda, and their development through a process of gradual and natural evolution.

Before dealing with the problem as such, it would not be out of place to consider the etymology of the word *Upaniṣad.*

The word *Upaniṣad* is used in a number of senses, and its exact primary meaning is still doubtful. It is usually derived from the root *sad* 'to sit', with *upa* and *ni* as affixes, and is translated as 'the knowledge obtained by sitting near (the teacher)'. In the Brāhmaṇas,[1] the word normally denotes the 'secret sense' or 'mystic import' of a word or passage, and sometimes the 'secret rule' of the mendicant. The *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (III. 1. 1) commences with the title 'The Upaniṣad of the Saṁhitā' (*athātas saṁhitāyā upaniṣat*).[2] *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[3] uses the word to designate a

[1] *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X. 3. 5. 12; 4. 5. 1; 5. 1. 1. etc.

[2] This title occurs also in the *Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, VII. 2.

[3] II. 4. 10; IV. 1. 2.; 5. 11.

class of writings, existing perhaps at the time, and resembling the Upaniṣads in matter as well as in manner. The sections of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* always end with the words *ity upaniṣad.* Among Indian writers, S'aṅkara understands the word to mean 'that which destroys ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and cutting off the bonds of worldly existence' (*ya imāṁ brahmavidyām upayanty ātmabhāvena s'raddhābhaktipurassarās santas teṣāṁ garbhajanmajarārogādyanarthapūgaṁ nis'ātayati paraṁ vā brahma gamayaty avidyādisaṁsārakāraṇaṁ cātyantam avasādayati vinās'ayatī tyupaniṣad; upanipūrvasya saderevam arthasmaraṇāt*).[1] The following traditional etymologies[2] are also known, though the authors are anonymous :

उपनीय तमात्मानं ब्रह्मापास्तद्वयं यतः ।
निहन्त्यविद्यां तज्जं च तस्मादुपनिषद्भवेत् ॥
निहत्यानर्थमूलं स्वाविद्यां प्रत्यक्तया परम् ।
नयत्यपास्तसंभेदमतो वोपनिषद्भवेत् ॥
प्रवृत्तिहेतून्निःशेषांस्तन्मूलोच्छेदकत्वतः ।
यतो ऽवसादयेद्विद्या तस्मादुपनिषद्भवेत् ॥
यथोक्तविद्याहेतुत्वाद्ग्रन्थोऽपि तदभेदतः ।
भवेदुपनिषन्नामा लाङ्गलं जीवनं यथा ॥

Several etymologies have been given by European scholars also. Thus, Max Müller[3] understands the word to mean first a 'session of pupils', next 'implicit faith' and last,

[1] S'aṅkara's commentary on *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, p. 9 (V. V. Press Edn.); Colebrooke, accepting this etymology of the word, feels that neither its etymology nor its acceptation has any direct connection with the idea of secrecy, concealment or mystery (*Miscellaneous Essays*, I. 92).

[2] cited in the *Vācaspatya Kos'a*, p. 1222 *b*.

[3] *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 318 ff.; Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 204; Roth and Bohtlingk, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, I. 957.

'truth' or 'divine revelation'. Oldenberg[1] traces the use of the word to the earlier sense of 'worship' (*upāsanā*). Deussen[2] feels that the original sense must have been 'secret word', next 'secret text', and then 'secret import'. To Hopkins,[3] the Upaniṣad denotes but a subsidiary treatise. But Keith[4] is right in pointing out that the evolution of meaning suggested by Deussen is improbable, and that Hopkins' view is untenable on the ground that it comes into conflict with the popular view which always understands the word in the sense of a text giving a 'secret meaning'.

Whatever might have been the original meaning of the word, it is clear from the above discussion that it means some text which has a 'secret teaching' to give.

Indian tradition, which considers the *Upaniṣads* as part of the Vedic literature, calls them the *Vedānta, i.e.*, the final portion of the Veda, the earlier portion being composed of the *Saṁhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas*; the *Sāṁhitās* mainly consist of hymns, prayers and spells addressed to the different gods, and the *Brāhmaṇas* are ritualistic treatises whose chief purpose is to explain and indicate the sacrificial application of the hymns contained in the *Saṁhitās*; the *Āraṇyakas* are texts intended to supplement the *Brāhmaṇas*, and the *Upaniṣads* usually form the final portion of these texts,[5] so that it can safely be said that 'the

[1] *Die Literatur des Alten Indien*, 72; *Z. D. M. G.*, Vol L. p. 457; Vol. LIV, p. 70; *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, pp. 37, 348. Keith disagrees with Oldenberg saying that, in Upaniṣadic Literature, the sense mentioned by him is conveyed by the word *upasad* which is clearly distinguishable from the word *upaniṣad*, and that the idea of reverence or worship must have passed away at an early date from its original sense. (*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 492.)

[2] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 16 ff.

[3] *Religions of India*, p. 218.

[4] *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, I. 92.

[5] The *Īśa Upaniṣad* and the *Śivasaṅkalpa* form part of the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, but they point out the exception rather than the rule.

Brāhmaṇas shade off imperceptibly into the *Āraṇyakas*, and the *Āraṇyakas* shade off into the *Upaniṣads* without violent change of any kind.[1]

The apparent dissimilarity, in matter as well as in manner, between the Upaniṣads and the earlier Vedic Literature, has made some scholars[2] doubt in this traditional belief[3] that there is a continuity of thought from the Saṁhitās down to the Upaniṣads, and also a unity of philosophical thought between them. These scholars imagine that, at the time when the Brahmins were still engaged in their sacrifices and rituals, there arose in the rival camp of the Kṣatriyas a new but developed type of thought which later got the name of the *Upaniṣads*.[4] One reason that is advanced to support this supposition is that Upaniṣadic thought is incompatible with the spirit of the Brahmin priests who 'lived by sacrifices', and that this kind of thought is possible only amongst people whose scepticism prevented them from being in sympathy with sacrifices.[5] Garbe[6] is perhaps the most enthusiastic

[1] Keith, *loc. cit.*

[2] Garbe, *B. Z. I. K.*, pp. 3 ff.; *Hindu Monism*, pp. 68 ff.; Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 17 ff.; Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, pp. 226 ff.; Hertel, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, XLI. 188; H. W. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Rigveda*, pp. 106 ff.

[3] C. R. Lanman (*Beginnings of Hindu Pantheism*, p. 12) also agrees with this view when he says "There is no abrupt break in the course of development from the old brahman religion to that of the Upaniṣads. The men who saw a new light felt that they were 'not come to destroy, but to fulfill'." Edgerton's view in this case is more pronounced when he maintains that 'every idea contained in at least the older Upaniṣads with almost no exceptions, is not new to the Upaniṣads, but can be found set forth, or at least *very* clearly fore-shadowed, in the older Vedic texts' [*J.A.O.S.* (1916), XXXVI. 197 ff.]; For a similar view. see H. Oertel, *Oriental Studies in Honour of C. E. Pavry*, pp. 353 ff.; Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, pp. 220 ff.; Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, pp. 493 ff.; Contrast S. Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophy*, I. 72) where he says "Some of the hymns shock us by their highly abstract philosophising, and from primitive polytheism to systematic philosophy it is a long, long way."

[4] Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 231; Deussen, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[5] Winternitz, *loc. cit.*

[6] Garbe, *op. cit.*, cited by Bloomfield, *loc. cit.*, where he refutes the view in an excellent manner.

advocate of this view. Disgusted as he is with the intolerable pretensions and tyrannies practised by the priests in Brahmanical India, he can consider the Brahmin priest proficient only at "excogitating sacrifice after sacrifice, and hair-splitting definitions and explanations of senseless ritualistic hocus-pocus. All at once lofty thought appears on the scene. To be sure, even then the traditional god-lore, sacrificial-lore, and folk-lore are not rejected, but the spirit is no longer satisfied with the cheap mysteries that surround the sacrificial altar. A passionate desire to solve the riddle of the universe and its relation to the own self holds the mind captive; nothing less will satisfy henceforth." The Brahmins by themselves are bold bad men who were too stupid to have worked their way 'from the sandy wastes of ritualism to the green summits where grows the higher thought of India,' and the birth of philosophy in India is due to the endeavours of the Kṣatriyas rather than to that of the Brahmins. The Kṣatriyas revolted from the sacrifice and introduced a monist philosophy centring in the idea of *Brahman*, presumably appropriated by them, with a curious sense of humour, from their rivals.[1]

Hertel[2] advocates the same view on the ground that the Kṣatriyas are the rationalists of the Upaniṣadic age who, unable to believe in the old Vedic gods, substituted instead the idea of nature powers, called by them *faute de mieux*, and propounded a philosophy which was essentially a monism, atheistic, materialistic, and morally indifferent. Granting that this is a fact, it has to be doubted whether,

[1] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 494; Keith rightly points out here that no where do we hear of the common populace demanding a monist philosophy.

[2] *Op. cit.*, cited by Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 494; H. W. Wallis (*op. cit.*, p. 108), though accepting that the Kṣatriyas are responsible for the birth of philosophy in India, does not favour the view that these people had a hostile spirit in them when they brought their mystic philosophy.

by this reasoning, Hertel is really complimenting the Kṣatriyas whom he is seen so anxious to praise.

Revolutions are exceptional phenomena of very rare occurrence, more so especially in the realm of thought, and it is always very difficult to believe in the sudden evolution of a new idea or a doctrine. Still greater is this difficulty if the birth of a lofty conception should be attributed to the influence of a people who, by nature, show the least relation with such a kind of avocation. Of such a nature is the above assertion that philosophic speculation in India took birth among the Kṣatriyas rather than the Brahmins.[1] It is difficult to understand how the Kṣatriyas, whose primary duty is to wield weapons in war, could have the tendency to resort to philosophic speculation, and how they were more fitted to indulge in this than the Brahmins. Philosophic reflection has a nearer connection with brahminhood rather than royalty. The Ṛgveda and the philosophical portions of the Atharvaveda contain the germs of almost all the conceptions that form the basis of Upaniṣadic thought. The Yajurveda which is purely liturgical in character, gives unprecedented importance to Prajāpati whose description in this Saṁhitā points him out as the clear precursor of the later Upaniṣadic *Brahman*. Nor is it right to think that the sacrifices taught in the Brāhmaṇas are opposed to the idea of philosophic speculation. Belief in the importance of of sacrifices, which is necessarily followed by the conviction that the godly sacrificers attain heaven, while the unbelieving

[1] Similar in nature is the attempt to attribute Buddhism and Sāṅkhya philosophy to Kṣatriyas; see V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 47 where he feels that Buddhism originated among Kṣatriyas of Mongolian origin; and Garbe (*Sāṁkhya Philosophie*, p. 5 ff.) who lays stress on the unbrahmanical character of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, and attributes it to the influence of the Kṣatriyas. Pargiter's (*Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, p. 58 ff.) attempt to prove that there are two distinct types of tradition traceable in ancient India, one of the Brahmins and the other of the Kṣatriyas, is also an attempt in the same direction.

non-sacrificers and the vicious fall into hell, represents but an early stage in the evolution of human thought. When the seers later realised the inadequacy of a retribution after death which is just rather than merciful, rigorous rather than educative, they evolved, in course of time, in the Upaniṣadic period, the theory of Karma and Transmigration which, far from being the theory of a pessimistic people, is the result of the healthy reflection of thoughtful minds.[1] Garbe[2] feels that the theory of Transmigration originated among the Kṣatriyas as a necessary corollary of their monistic philosophy in the Upaniṣadic age, and that the Brahmins, pressed by popular opinion, later incorporated it into their creed. But this view cannot be accepted because it is clear that the kernel of this theory is already found in the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas, and that it was left to the Upaniṣadic seers only to consolidate and develop the eschatological conceptions of the earlier period.[3] There are, therefore, surer grounds to hold that there is a gradual development of thought from the time of the Saṁhitās down to that of the Upaniṣads, than to indulge in such unsupportable conjectures as the sudden appearance of the latter kind of thought among the Kṣatriyas.

The so-called textual evidence for this theory which is often claimed is also not quite sound. Deussen bases his conclusion on the following stories found in the Upaniṣads: The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V. 11 ff.) narrates the story how five

[1] For a vindication of this view, see my paper, *The Message of the Theory of Karma* in the *Aryan Path*, Vol. XI, pp. 603 ff.

[2] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 494; that the Upaniṣads teach a monistic philosophy is not certain. A careful study of them shows that they represent no single unified system, but a set of unconnected views held by the diverse thinkers of the time; cf. *F. Edgerton*, J.A.O.S. (1916), p. 197, where he says that the Upaniṣads, as a whole, proclaim no philosophical system, nor anything that even remotely resembles a single unified philosophical system. The same opinion is expressed by R. E. Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 9.

[3] See *infra*.

Brahmins, who first solicited Uddālaka Āruṇi to instruct them concerning Ātman Vais'vānara, went with the latter on his expressing his inability to answer them, to King As'vapati Kaikeya who, however, did not fail to satisfy their demands. The same Upaniṣad elsewhere [1] speaks of two Brahmins who were instructed by King Pravāhaṇa Jaivali concerning *Ākās'a*, as the ultimate substratum of all things. In another tract [2] of this Upaniṣad, we are told that this instruction had been previously imparted by Atidhanvan to Udaras'āṇḍilya, but Deussen would conjecture [3] even here, on the basis of names, that it is a Kṣatriya that imparts instruction to a Brahmin. Still another context [4] of this Upaniṣad gives the story of how Nārada approaches Sanatkumāra, and how the latter, on hearing the former recount all that he had learnt till then, pronounces all that as a study in name (*nāmaiva etat*). The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1.) likewise [5] gives the story of Bālāki Gārgya who, offering before King Ajātas'atru to expound the doctrine of *Brahman*, is able to give only twelve definitions all of which are pointed out to be erroneous by the King who later instructs him in the proper doctrine. The King is stated here to preface his teaching with the remark that it is against the rule that the doctrine of *Brahman* should be explained by a Kṣatriya to a Brahmin who approaches him in the capacity of a pupil. The doctrine of Transmigration [6] is said to have been propounded by Pravāhaṇa Jaivali in the form of a teaching to Āruṇi. The King says here to the

[1] I. 8 ff.

[2] I. 9. 3.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

[4] Chap. VII.

[5] *The Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* (Chap. IV.) has a parallel passage.

[6] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V. 3 ff.; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, V. 2; the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* (I) has slight variations.

Brahmin " Because, as you have told me, O Gautama, this doctrine has never up to the present time been in circulation among the Brahmins, therefore in all the worlds the government has remained in the hands of the warrior caste ".

King Ajātas'atru's remark in the fourth story that it is contrary to the rule that a Brahmin should go as a pupil to a Kṣatriya cannot be an evidence to prove that Upaniṣadic speculation was the monopoly of the Kṣatriyas. It proves, on the contrary, that such discourses are proper only to Brahmins and that it was very rarely that a Kṣatriya commanded such a knowledge.[1] If Sanatkumāra pointed out that all non-Upaniṣadic knowledge possessed by Nārada was of no use, it is possible to infer only that non-Upaniṣadic knowledge compared with that pertaining to the Upaniṣads is useless. Surely, this story cannot point out that Upaniṣadic thought is the prerogative of the Kṣatriyas in so far as it is Sanatkumāra who propounds the *Brahmavidyā*. Pravāhaṇa Jaivali's concluding remark to Āruṇi that the doctrine of Transmigration was till then unknown to the Brahmins and that the Kṣatriyas were hence supreme, must be taken in its true perspective. Seeing that royalty can have no natural connection with the theory of Karma, and that the germs of the latter theory are clearly found in the earlier Vedic literature, this boastful utterance cannot merit any serious attention.

Winternitz[2] draws in the evidence of the following stories from the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads in this context.

[1] cf. Kumārila who observes that the teaching of Buddha cannot command confidence, because he is a Kṣatriya and is transgressing his *dharma* in his attempt to teach, which is essentially the privilege of the Brahmin [*S'ākyādivacanāni. . . . buddhādibhiḥ praṇītāni . . . ; svadharmātikrameṇa ca yena, kṣatriyeṇa satā pravaktṛtvapratigrahau pratipannau sa dharmam aviplutam upadekṣyatī ti kaḥ samās'vāsaḥ* [*Tantravārtika* on *Jaimini* I. 3. 2., p. 195 (Anandasrama Edn.).]

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 227 ff.

In the *Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa* (XXVI. 5), King Pratardana converses with the priests concerning the sacrificial science. In the *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI), the story is told how King Janaka confounded all the priests by his knowledge and how Yājñavalkya who was one of them, later approached Janaka for instruction. In the Upaniṣads, Satyakama of dubious parentage was instructed in the highest knowledge,[1] and Brahmins like Gautama, father of Svetaketu, and Uddālaka Āruṇi, are spoken of as being instructed by Kṣatriyas like King Pravāhaṇa Jaivali and As'vapati. The fact that numerous references are thus available to point out that not merely Kṣatriyas and other non-brahmanical races, but also women like Gārgī and Maitreyī were connected with the intellectual life and literary activity of ancient times, and the fact that very often the Kṣatriyas are spoken of as the teachers of Brahmins in some of the most intricate doctrines of the Upaniṣads, is sufficient proof for Winternitz to conclude that " while the Brahmins were pursuing their barren sacrificial science, other circles were already engaged upon those highest questions which were at last treated so admirably in the Upaniṣads."[2] The story of Satyakāma cannot prove Winternitz's proposition. We are told that Gautama who is approached by Satyakāma for instruction consents to do so only after he has made sure that his would-be pupil is a Brahmin. Satyakāma is unable to give his *gotra*, the surest identification of a Brahmin, but is at least honest enough to narrate faithfully what his mother told him about his birth. Gautama is convinced that Satyakāma must be a Brahmin because he has been truthful, and accepts him as a pupil with the remark " No one but a true Brahmin would thus speak out. Go and fetch

[1] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, IV. 4.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

fuel, my boy, and I shall initiate you. You have not swerved from the truth". Does not this story point out that only Brahmins were entitled for instruction in the highest knowledge in these times, because of their uprightness which was unparalleled? The other stories, no doubt, prove that the Kṣatriyas and others were connected with the literary activity of the time, but it is too much to conclude on their basis that the Kṣatriyas were the *sole* custodians of this kind of thought. The Upaniṣads themselves speak very often of certain Brahmin thinkers who proved themselves immeasurably supreme to the Kṣatriyas. There is perhaps no Kṣatriya in the entire Upaniṣadic age who can rival Yājñavalkya in eminence. The influential position occupied by this sage at the court of King Janaka is alluded to very often in the Upaniṣads, and one portion of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is denominated the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa*, as specially celebrating the victorious exploits of Yājñavalkya over his contemporary rivals.[1] Such is the enthusiasm of King Janaka when he felt himself over-powered by the brilliance with which Yājñavalkya expounded *Brahman*, that he cries out "Here, O Yājña valkya, is my kingdom, and here am I at your service."[2] The *Maitri Upaniṣad* (I. 1 ff.) records the story of King Bṛhadratha who, filled with remorse, went to the sage Sākāyana, and implored him to help him out of the world of existence.

Many of the stories mentioned above do speak of Brahmins being outwitted by Kṣatriyas and of getting instruction at their hands. The authority of the stories cannot be denied, though it can be pointed out that even these cannot prove that Upaniṣadic thought was monopolized by the

[1] cf. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 329.
[2] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. 2. 4.

Kṣatriyas.[1] If the accounts given of Brahmins being defeated in debate at the hands of Kṣatriyas can be used to prove that the latter were the sole custodians of Upaniṣadic thought, the stories which speak of the honour paid by Kṣatriyas to Brahmins as in the case of Janaka and Yājñavalkya can be adduced to prove the contrary. The fact that definite evidences are available of Brahmins being engaged in literary activities from very early times is an additional evidence to support the latter proposition, and the conclusion is inevitable that the Brahmins were as much the originators of this kind of thought as the Kṣatriyas.

Further, we must understand all these stories in their true perspective. If there had been any kind of opposition between the Brahmins with their ritualism and the Kṣatriyas with their philosophic insight, why should these Brahmins be the very people who record the contents of the Upaniṣads in literary form, accept them as a homogeneous part of their Veda, and preserve them with as much enthusiasm as the portions dealing with sacrifices? No one can deny the intimate connection of Upaniṣadic thought with the peace and quiet of the Āśramas in the forest which were the habitations of Brahmins and not of Kṣatriyas. No one has till now contended that the sacrificial systems were evolved in the quiet atmosphere of the forests, and that the monistic doctrines were evolved in the buzzle and confusion of political life of palaces and cities, and in the atmosphere of terror and slaughter of the battle-fields. Further, the Kṣatriyas were the greatest patrons of the sacrifices conducted by the Brahmins, just as the Brahmin ṛṣis were the most faithful propagandists of philosophic monism supposed to have been evolved by Kṣatriyas. Looked at in this way, the theory of a conflict

[1] cf. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II. 106 ff.

between the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas has absolutely no foundation except in the imagination of a few scholars who are obsessed by the conflict of orthodox church and philosophic thought in Europe.

Perhaps we have to read in these stories some kind of allegory. We cannot completely ignore the stories and they must have some significance. Although the doctrine was evolved by the contemplative mind of persons living in the seclusion of the forests, it is not separable from the actualities of life, that is, living in the world with the Kṣatriyas as the centre of such life. In the midst of the differences and quarrels that dominate the life around the Kṣatriyas, the unity of life has a far greater significance than in the peaceful life surrounding the Brahmins. The stories regarding the Upaniṣadic doctrines being known more among Kṣatriyas than among Brahmins may have only this allegorical significance.

If Upaniṣadic thought should thus be the logical development of the earlier speculations of the Brahmins, it may be asked how the Kṣatriyas came to gain so much proficiency in it. The question is easily answered. The Upaniṣadic age was a time when the courts of princes served as the debating halls where erudite but indigent Brahmins exhibited their skill in philosophical discourses and obtained their livelihood as the reward. Janaka, on seeing Yajñavalkya enter his court, asks him what brought him there, whether it was the need of cattle or of subtle discussion, and the latter replies that he was in dire need of both.[1] It is quite possible that each prince who was the witness of many a debate of this kind was quite conversant with many an intricate point in philosophy. We thus hear of King Janaka tell Yājñavalkya, when the latter came to him to demonstrate his skill, that Jitvan S'aivalini told him that

[1] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. 1.

vāk is *Brahman*, that according to Udaṅka S'aulbāyana, *prāṇa* is so, *cakṣus* according to Barku Vārṣṇa, *s'rotra* according to Gardabhīvipīta Bhāradvāja and so on.[1] Princes like these who had opportunities of learning by listening and witnessing, may naturally have proved superior to many a Brahmin thinker who tried to expound his own theory. This explains the accounts given of many Brahmin thinkers who are reported to have been confounded by Kṣatriyas.

The safest conclusion in this respect is, therefore, that while sacrifices and other rituals were restricted to men, and, among them, to Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and other non-brahmanical races, and even women, were allowed to participate in philosophical discussions,[2] and that, in Upaniṣadic times, as in modern days, intellectual activity was thrown open to all irrespective of caste or sex.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] See *supra*, p. 49 n.; cf. R. D. Ranade, *Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, pp. 61 ff.; Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, I. 34 ff.; R. K. Mookerji, *Men and Thought in Ancient India*, pp. 23-26.

CHAPTER X

TRANSMIGRATION TRACED TO THE ṚGVEDA

WITH most scholars who have had occasion to compare early Vedic thought with the Upaniṣads, the tendency is to come to the conclusion that the spirit permeating the two periods is entirely different: the Vedic Indian is quite fond of the world he lives in, while the Upaniṣadic seer has come to realize that the rosy bush of life is after all full of thorns which do not fail to sting the unwary man who may rush to seize the beautiful flower. The doctrine of Transmigration is also considered to fit in more with the trend of the idea pervading the Upaniṣads than with the spirit of healthy joy of earthly life which is conspicuous in the Saṁhitā period, and the view has been repeatedly expressed[1] that the Vedic seers are not at all familiar with the twin conception of Karma and Transmigration. In the present section this view is examined, and an attempt has been made to prove that it is wrong to think that the theory of Transmigration rose up all of a sudden in the

[1] Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, I. 78 ff.; A. Kaegi, *Rigveda*, p. 71; M. Phillips, *Teaching of the Vedas*, p. 169; A. A. Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 387 ff.; *Lectures on Comparative Religion*, p. 61, 67; V. S. Ghate, *Lectures on the Rigveda*, p. 161; Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, II. 570 ff.; Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, pp. 254 ff. Contrast E. W. Hopkins, *Ethics of India*, p. 44 n.

Upaniṣadic period, and that the germs of this doctrine are clearly seen even in the Ṛgveda.

The views that have been hitherto brought forward regarding the origin of the doctrine of Transmigration can be broadly divided into two classes: the first, which denies the origin of this doctrine in Vedic literature, attempts to seek its origin among the aboriginal inhabitants of India; and the second less extremist in character is insistent upon finding the traces of the doctrine in the early stages of Vedic belief alone. Two tendencies are perceptible among the followers of the latter view; some of them feel that it is inconsistent to think that the eschatology of the Saṁhitā period admits of a belief in this theory also, and hence trace the origin of the doctrine of Transmigration to the Brāhmaṇas; but others who are less conservative in nature feel that, if not these two doctrines in entirety, at least the conceptions that later led to the formulation of the theory of Transmigration, are all clearly seen even in the early stages of Vedic belief, that is to say, even in the Saṁhitās.

Macdonell[1] and other exponents of the first view feel that it is impossible to think that the Vedic Indians, whose attitude towards life was joyous and optimistic, could formulate a theory like the doctrine of Transmigration, which is so thoroughly opposed to their creed. But the fact is undeniable that, as early as the sixth cent. B. C. when Buddhism arose, the doctrine of Transmigration was, in its full-fledged form, already established on a sure foundation. These scholars, therefore, feel that the Aryan settlers might have received "the first impulse in this direction from the aboriginal inhabitants of India." Feeling, however, that among these aboriginal races "the notion of Transmigration does not go beyond a belief in the continuance of human existence in

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *loc. cit.*

animals and trees", Macdonell and others modify, a little, their statement that the Aryans might have borrowed the doctrine of Transmigration from the savage tribes. While they would hold that the theory of Transmigration is an alien doctrine, borrowed by the Aryans from the aboriginal tribes, they would also add that the Aryans "certainly deserve the credit of having elaborated out of it the theory of an unbroken chain of existences, intimately connected with the moral principle of requital."

In direct opposition to the above view, we have the opinion of another band of scholars who maintain that it is more natural to expect and to seek the origin of this doctrine in the beginnings of Indian belief, rather than to indulge in such stray fancies as the influence of the aboriginal neighbours upon the Vedic Aryans. These scholars are convinced that, even though it may not be possible to find in the earlier Vedic texts, the doctrine of Transmigration in its full-fledged form, it is still possible to seek therein definitely the various conceptions that led to the formulation of the theory. Weber and Deussen think that the real beginnings of the doctrine of Transmigration are to be seen only in the Brāhmaṇas, and that belief in this theory is inconsistent with the spirit of early Vedic eschatology.[1] And other scholars,[2] hold that a gradual growth of the doctrine can be traced even from the period of the Saṁhitās. But both, however, start with the conviction that it is fantastic to consider that the doctrine of Transmigration has been borrowed from the aboriginal tribes.

It has been indisputably accepted that the *locus classicus* of the doctrine of Transmigration is to be found only in the

[1] *Z.D.M.G.*, IX. 243, 308, cited by Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V, pp. 322-23; and Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 32.

[2] C. Kunhan Raja, *Cultural Heritage of India*, I. 29-31; also R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 146 f.

Upaniṣads, and that the Upaniṣadic theory has evolved in various forms in popular literature, in the Epics, in the Bhagavadgītā, and in the sacred texts of the Buddhists and the Jains.[1]

It may look at the very outset that belief in the theory of Transmigration is incompatible with the spirit of early Vedic Religion which teems with optimism. A spirit of healthy joy in the life on earth seems to be the leading characteristic of the religion of the early Aryans. If they worshipped the great gods, it was not immortality or Heaven that was their aim; they craved for a long life of a hundred autumns, for heroic sons, and for cattle (RV. IV. 50. 6). 'May we live for a hundred autumns' is the oft-repeated boon that the Vedic people desire from their propitious gods. (RV. VII. 66. 16 d).

Nor were they afraid to die, for; even after death, they went to a place which was not uncovetable. Their ancestors, who went long back (RV. X. 14. 2) had prepared for them another place which was more joyous. Yama was the first to die (RV. X. 14. 2), and consequently, perhaps, he is the ruler of the dead (RV. X. 16. 9). He has found a dwelling in the highest Heaven, and to this place, Yama, the assembler of people (RV. X. 14. 1), admits all the dead. Here the dead man obtains a resting place (RV. X. 14. 9), when recognised by Yama as his own (AV. XVIII. 2. 37). The dead man traverses by the well-trodden path and reaches the abode of Yama, who sits beside a tree engaged in an everlasting bout with the gods (RV. X. 135. 1.) To this party the new-comer is a welcome guest (RV. X. 14. 8; X. 16. 5). The moment

[1] E. W. Hopkins, J. R. A. S. (1906), pp. 581 ff.; (1907), pp. 668 ff.; Louis De la Valle Poussin, *Legacy of India*, Ed. G. T. Garratt, p. 167; M. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 147.

the dead man enters this abode, his true home, he shakes off all his imperfections. He overcomes old age and other bodily frailties. He is united with a glorious body and passes a life of eternal enjoyment (RV. X. 14. 10). He has entered a place where there are no lame or crooked of limb, and where the weak are no longer subject to pay tribute to the strong (AV. III. 29. 3). It is a 'land overflowing with milk and honey,' where there is eternal light and variety of enjoyment, where all people are equal and where pleasure is unrestrained. Heaven, therefore, is, to the Vedic people, no more than 'a glorified world of material joys.'[1]

So much for the destiny of the righteous. We will now consider the destiny of the wicked. If the virtuous people got Heaven as their reward after death, it is natural for us to expect some abode after death to those whose conduct on earth was wicked. There is no specific mention in the Ṛgveda of any such abode for the wicked, and, if there are a few subtle references, we can only say with Macdonell that 'the evidence cannot be said to go beyond showing belief in a Hell as an underground darkness.'[2] This does not mean that the Vedic Aryans considered sin very lightly.

The sinner was always detected and punished even while living on earth. Varuṇa stands out as the custodian of Justice, watching the conduct of people and setting his spies everywhere for the purpose. As a reminder and punishment of sin, Varuṇa is described as inflicting disease. A member of the family of Vasiṣṭha was fettered with disease (*pāśa*) and the wise assured him that he must be a sinner, because his illness was proof that Varuṇa, who hates sin, was angry with him.

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 168; cf. *supra*, p. 54 ff., 79 ff., for a fuller account of the Vedic Heaven.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169.; for a fuller discussion on this subject, see *infra*.

The stanza (RV. VII. 89. 2), seems to refer to dropsy as the favourite infliction of Varuṇa.[1] The victim supplicates for, mercy that he may be relieved of the disease and saved from death—

> " Since like one tottering I move,
> O Slinger, like inflated skin,
> Be gracious, Mighty Lord, and spare."

We, therefore, see that the Ṛgvedic seers seem to be content with the punishment on earth for sin, for in the Ṛgveda there is no specific mention of Hell as of Heaven. The Atharvaveda speaks, however, of the house below, the abode of female goblins and sorceresses (AV. II. 14. 3) called *Nārakaloka* (AV. XII. 4. 36), in contrast with *Svargaloka*, the Heavenly world, the realm of Yama.

And in the simple eschatology of the early Vedic Aryans, it would be inconsistent to attempt to find traces of belief in the doctrine of Transmigration. But still, however superfluous and absurd such an attempt may be, the attempt to seek in early Vedic eschatology, the genesis of the doctrine of Transmigration would not be so ridiculous. A careful study of the early Vedic beliefs is capable of showing that, at least with the conceptions that later led to the formulation of the theory of Transmigration, the Vedic poets were not unfamiliar.

The doctrine of Transmigration is a complex conception, and while it involves within it more than one doctrine, there also exist a few doctrines which are presupposed by it. An attempt at an analysis of the doctrine would make this clear. When the doctrine of Transmigration holds that the individual is reborn after death and exists in other corporeal forms, deter-

[1] cf. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII. 33., where Varuṇa inflicts dropsy on Hariścandra for breaking his promise.

mined by his deeds on earth, it involves within it the Karma doctrine that every man must reap what he has sown, and that every action on earth shall have its result. The doctrines presupposed by it are the eternality of the Soul, its continued existence even though its present body is destroyed, and that the Soul is the doer and sufferer.

We will examine if we can find in the early stages of Vedic belief a knowledge of any of these conceptions, and if we should be successful in such an attempt, there can be no hesitation in asserting that the genesis of the doctrine of Transmigration can be traced to the early Aryan texts. Prof. R. D. Ranade cites hymns[1] from the I and X Mandalas of the Ṛgveda to show that "the three chief moments in the idea of Transmigration *viz.*, the passage of the Soul from the body, its habitation in other forms of existence like the plants or the waters, and even its return to the human form, are all implicitly found even so far back as the times of the Ṛgveda."[2]

One verse (X. 14. 8) in the Ṛgveda seems to speak of a return to this world after enjoying the fruits of good deeds in the world of the manes:[3]

सं गच्छस्व पितृभिः सं यमेनेष्टापूर्तेन परमे व्योमन् ।
हित्वायावद्यं पुनरस्तमेहि सं गच्छस्व तन्वा सुवर्चाः ॥

It is usual to translate the word *ehi* in this verse by 'go back', but it ought really to be rendered by 'come here' which seems to be the natural meaning of the word in its numerous occurrences in the Ṛgveda. Moreover, it is difficult to find another context in the Ṛgveda where heaven is called the home of the Soul. Nor can it be said that this verse cannot

[1] RV. I. 164. 31; X. 16. 3; 58. 1-12.
[2] R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-52.
[3] C. Kunhan Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

possibly speak of a return to the world after death because the doctrine of Transmigration is unknown to the Ṛgvedic Aryans, for this would be to argue in a circle.

One other stanza in the Ṛgveda also deserves consideration in this context. It runs as follows :

> नवो॑नवो भवति॒ जाय॑मा॒नोऽह्नां॑ के॒तुरु॒षसा॑मे॒त्यग्र॑म् ।
> भा॒गं दे॒वेभ्यो॒ वि द॑धात्या॒यन् प्र च॒न्द्रमा॑स्तिरते दी॒र्घमायुः॑ ॥ [1]

Griffith translates this stanza as follows :

" He, born afresh, is new and new for-ever ; ensign of days, he goes before the mornings. Coming, he orders for the gods their portion ; the Moon prolongs the days of our existence."

It is clear that, in this stanza, the Moon is described, and that the Vedic poet seems to think that the disappearance of the Moon on the New-Moon day is only because he is dead. And when the Moon is visible the next day, the seer says that the dead Moon is reborn. From this, the inference is inevitable that the Vedic poets did have an idea of survival after death and repeated rebirths, and that this may be a sort of imagery of human fate ascribed to the Moon. Only, we have no evidence to say that they believed that this rebirth had any connection with Karma.

The Brāhmaṇas seem to go a step further. It is their aim to prescribe rituals and, while they reward him that accomplishes, they do not hesitate to punish him that omits. The *S'atapatha Brāhmaṇa* says " For whatever food a man eats in this world, by the very same is he eaten again

[1] RV. X. 85. 19 ; found also in AV. VII. 81. 2 ; XIV. 1. 24 ; and *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṁhitā*, p. 181. 5.

(*pratyatti*) in the other".[1] In another place the same Brāhmaṇa says: "For indeed they place him on the balance in yonder world; and whichever of the two sinks down, that will he follow, whether it be the good or the evil."[2] Statements like these which speak of inevitable retribution are abundant in the Brāhmaṇas. The immediate inference that is inevitable from such statements, is that the Brāhmaṇas knew that each act on earth has its result, whether it is good or bad, and the doer must suffer for it. Only, it is not specified in these texts how the man is punished.

A similar idea occurs in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* also, where it is stated that the odour of a man's virtuous act spreads in all directions, as is the fragrance of a full-blown blossom, when it is wafted by the wind. (*Yathā vṛkṣasya saṁpuṣpitasya dūrād gandho vāti evaṁ puṇyasya karmaṇaḥ gandho vāti*).[3] Here also, as in the Brāhmaṇas, the idea prevails that a man must suffer the consequence of his deeds.

From what we have seen so far, we find that, in the texts earlier than the Upaniṣads, we have the idea of survival in other bodily forms existing unconnected with the theory of Karma, and the theory of Karma existing unconnected with the idea of survival in other corporeal forms. Almost all the material that is necessary for the formulation of the conception of Transmigration seems to be available in the earlier texts, and there is every likelihood that the Upaniṣadic seers might have been led to consolidate all these floating conceptions to formulate the theory of Transmigration which forms, even to this day, the leading gospel of an entire nation.

[1] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XII. 9. 1. 1; S.B.E., Vol. XLIV, p. 260.
[2] *Ibid.*, XI. 2. 7. 33.; S.B.E., Vol. XLIV, p. 45.
[3] *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, X. 9.

There seems to be, therefore, no justification to the view which denies the indigenous origin of the doctrine of Transmigration, and which holds that it is un-Aryan in origin and that it was borrowed by the Vedic Aryans from their aboriginal neighbours. Instead of rushing to such unsupportable conclusions, there appears to be greater justification in holding that the doctrine of Transmigration has its origin among the Aryans themselves, though its *locus classicus* cannot be accurately found in any text earlier than the Brāhmaṇas or the Upaniṣads.

CHAPTER XI

SIN AND HELL AS UNDERSTOOD IN THE VEDA

TILL now we had to do with the happy side of the Vedic views regarding life and death. The relationship between these seers and their gods was considered, as also the intimations of immortality in the Vedic period. The Vedic conception of Heaven, which is the world to which the virtuous among them went after death, was also discussed. The various views which these people had regarding Sin, and the punishment conceived by them for the wicked among them, forms the subject now for study.

From simple worshippers of the personified forces of Nature like the Vedic Aryans, it may not be possible to expect a theory of Virtue and Vice which is either elaborate or complicated. The virtuous, to them, are the godly men, piously devoted to the gods, and those others whose conduct on earth has been commendable. The godly men desire to go after death to the highest world of Viṣṇu and enjoy there for ever.[1] The Ṛbhus and the Aṅgirases, and Maruts, who were originally ordinary mortals, attained divinity and immortality respectively, through their special prowess.[2] The

[1] RV. I. 22. 20, 21 ; I. 154. 5.

[2] RV. III. 60. 3 ; IV. 35. 8 ; X. 62. 1 ; I. 85. 7.

frequent descriptions[1] of the seers guarding the Sun are possibly, as Keith[2] says, an allusion to the idea that the stars are the souls of the Holy dead, for the Sun is often spoken of as the home of the fathers. As for the ordinary mortal, whose merit only is his virtue and nothing else, his destiny lies in the world of Yama, in whose company and that of his ancestors he can revel. As a result of his *iṣṭāpūrta*, he takes up here a fresh body, rid of all human infirmities, and one as befits a resident in Yama's Heaven. We also hear of the fathers (*pitaraḥ*) who lead the life of the gods themselves for, with them they feast (RV. VII. 76. 4) and with them are invited to partake of the offerings given by their descendants on earth (RV. X. 14. 5). Some of the fathers who come to the sacrifice after being thus invited, are said to rejoice in the call *svāhā* in common with the gods, while others rejoice with the call *svadhā* (RV. X. 14. 3). Like the gods, they go to the sacrifice full of gifts (RV. X. 15. 10, 11), and like them, they forgive sins of their earthly descendants (RV. X. 15. 6).

So much for the nature and destiny of the virtuous. In the view of the Vedic poets, the wicked are those who do not worship the customary gods (*adevayuḥ*), who are averse to prayer (*brahmadviṣaḥ*), who are irreligious (*avratāḥ*, *apavratāḥ*), and who offer no oblations (*asunvataḥ*, *arātayaḥ*, *apṛṇataḥ*), and no prayer (*as'asaḥ*). The Rākṣasas, the Dasyus and the Phallic worshippers (*s'is'nadevāḥ*), the worshippers of 'mad' gods (*mūradevāḥ*), and the *Kimīdins* (sceptics), who did not accept the Vedic Gods, also belong to the same category. Various kinds of penalty are mentioned for all these offenders. Agni is requested to withhold

[1] RV. X. 107. 7; 154. 5.

[2] *ERE*., XI. 843 ff.

his favour from the two godless persons, the rich man who, not acknowledging Agni as the Lord, is chary of gifts at sacred rites (*aninasya prahoṣe ararusạḥ dhaninaḥ*) and the man who rarely praises the gods (*kadācana prajigataḥ*),[1] to vex those who have no thought of worshipping him (*ararusạḥ tapa*),[2] to burn like a dry twig the man who does not worship (*arātiṁ . . . dhakṣi atasam na s'uṣkam*),[3] to consume the unadoring Rākṣasas,[4] to overcome with his fierce radiance those adversaries who injure the firm and valued glories of the sapient Varuṇa and Mitra,[5] and to kill the non-worshipping Dasyus (*akratūn dasyūn*).[6] Prosperous men who do not worship Agni become destitute of strength (*ye na īrayanti . . . s'avasaḥ apa*).[7]

Indra is requested to slay him who offers no oblations to him (*asunvantam*) and who does not hence delight him,[8] to root out those who offer no libations (*apṛṇataḥ*),[9] to hurl down to death the non-worshipping Dasyu (*adevayuṁ dasyum*),[10] to hide wealth from the riteless, godless man who sleeps unbrokenly, and to make him die by his own devices,[11] and to help the seer to vanquish the godless man, be he a *Dāsa* or an *Ārya*.[12] To him who offers no worship to him, Indra is said to be like a long road which retards the journey

[1] RV. I. 150. 2.
[2] RV. III. 18. 2.
[3] RV. IV. 4. 4.
[4] RV. IV. 4. 15.
[5] RV. IV. 5. 4.
[6] RV. VII. 6. 3.
[7] RV. V. 20. 2.
[8] RV. I. 176. 4.
[9] RV. VI. 44. 11.
[10] RV. VIII. 70. 11.
[11] RV. VIII. 97. 3.
[12] RV. X. 38. 3.

(*dīrgho na sidhram*).[1] Indra destroys with his thunderbolt those who pay no homage to him (*amanyamānān*).[2] While Indra is a friend of him who offers oblations to him, he contracts no friendship with the wealthy trader (*Paṇi*) who offers him not any libation; but he takes away his wealth and destroys him when destitute.[3] Indra destroys the adverse assembly that offers no libation to him (*asunvām indra saṁsadaṁ viṣūcīṁ vyanāśayaḥ*),[4] conquers the power (*Māyā*) of the godless,[5] and destroys their treasure-hoards.[6] He leads his friends, the devotees that offer him worship, to battle against the radiant persons of the godless, and is the unique man who is able to slay those hosts in battle.[7] The seer hopes to smite full dead his enemy, the non-worshipper, through the help of Indra.[8]

The Aśvins are asked to pass or keep aloof (*atikramiṣṭam*) and to take away the life (*juratam*) of the non-worshipper, while the worshipper is to be rewarded with the light of knowledge.[9]

Bṛhaspati is asked to render transitory the wealth of those who enjoy without satisfying gods by prayers (*visarmāṇaṁ kṛṇuhi vittam*), and put aside from the Sun (*sūryād yāvayasva*) *i.e.*, condemn to darkness those who perform not sacred rites (*apavratān*) and those who are averse to prayer (*brahmadviṣaḥ*).[10]

[1] RV. I. 173. 11.
[2] RV. II. 12. 10.
[3] RV. IV. 25. 7; V. 34. 5; VIII. 21. 14.
[4] RV. VIII. 14. 15.
[5] RV. X. 111. 6.
[6] RV. X. 138. 4.
[7] RV. X. 27. 2, 3.
[8] RV. VIII. 89. 2.
[9] RV. I. 182. 3.
[10] RV. V. 42. 9.

Mitra and Varuṇa are to exterminate those who are not diligent in adoration (*ohasā na*), who do not perform sacrifices (*ayajñasācaḥ*), and who do not propitiate (*na putrāḥ*),[1] and are to see that the days of non-worshippers will pass without descendants (*ayan māsā ayajvanām avīrāḥ*).[2] They afflict with disease him who neglects their worship.[3]

Maruts entertain severe displeasure towards the withholder of offerings (*dveṣaḥ araruṣe dadhanti*),[4] and are once (RV. VI. 52. 2) asked to bring agonies of burning on him who dares revile at the prayer that is being made (***brahma vā yaḥ kriyamāṇaṁ ninitsāt tapūṁṣi tasmai vṛjināni santu***).

Soma is requested to drive off the folk who love not gods,[5] and to keep away from his adorers the godless and the false.[6] He quells the riteless Dasyu,[7] and burns up or drives into the pit the hated riteless ones.[8]

No godless man can approach Sūrya when he is driving forth with his dappled steeds (RV. IX. 37. 3.)

Illiberality was severely reprimanded, and philanthropy evoked the highest admiration, as can be seen in the ***dānastutis*** which are dedicated specially to those Kings who were liberal in gifts to the priestly singers in Vedic India. In order to discourage stinginess, it was very often proclaimed that the gods themselves would punish one guilty of such a crime. The god Savitṛ is thus said to destroy the illiberal (RV. IX. 61. 25; 63. 5). One entire hymn (X. 117) in the

[1] RV. VI. 67. 9.
[2] RV. VII. 61. 4.
[3] RV. I. 122. 9.
[4] RV. VII. 56. 19.
[5] RV. IX. 63. 2.
[6] RV. IX. 104. 6; 105. 6.
[7] RV. IX. 41. 2.
[8] RV. IX. 73. 5.

Ṛgveda is devoted to the condemnation of 'illiberality', while another (X. 107) describes the glory of 'liberality.' The following verses will give a fairly good idea of the spirit of the latter hymn :

" The liberal does not mourn or die ;
No pain or care his life annoys ;
This world is his with all its joys.
And future bliss beyond the sky.

He owns a princely palace bright,
And dwells in god-like pomp and pride ;
A richly decked and winning bride
Sits fair and blooming by his side,
And fills his heart with love's delight.

With plenteous stores of corn and wine
Supplied, a merry life he leads ;
Swift o'er the plain his chariot speeds,
Whirled on by prancing, snorting, steeds ;
He smites his foes by aid divine." [1]

Indra is said to have seized, without opposition, the hundred-gated Castle's treasure by craft, and to have slain the phallus-worshippers (*s'is'nadevāḥ*).[2]

[1] X. 107. 8 ff., translated by Muir, *op. cit.*, V. 435.

[2] RV. X. 99. 3; there is a good deal of controversy as regards the exact meaning of this word. Yāska (*Nirukta*, IV. 19) explains the word *s'is'nadeva* by *abrahmacarya*. This meaning is adopted by both Durga, the commentator on the *Nirukta*, and Sāyaṇa. Kaegi (*Rigveda*, n. 62) feels that the word may be an appellation for priapic or lustful demons, and he translates it by *schwanz-götter*. Muir originally (*op. cit.*, II. 391., n. 76) believed that the word is a far more opprobrious epithet applied to the *Rākṣasas* who are often called *acitas* (mad), and *mūradevāḥ*, 'worshippers of mad gods'. But he later revises his opinion and remarks: "So long as we are ignorant of the real sense of *s'is'nadevāḥ* . . . it must be understood either of men or demons, either of whom would have been unwelcome visitors at an Ārian ceremonial" (*op. cit.*, IV. 411). The

Besides non-worship of the accepted gods, several other kinds of sin were also recognized by the Vedic seers, which fact proves beyond doubt that these seers were conscious of the importance of living a moral life. It was the belief of these poets that the gods maintained the moral order of the universe, and that any breach of conduct on the part of man was an offence against the gods, a violent transgression of their laws. *Varuṇa* and *Aditi* are the most important gods in this respect, though other gods like *Savitṛ*, *Sūrya*, *Uṣas*, *Dyāvāpṛthivī*, *As'vins* and *Agni* also assume the aspect of punishers and remitters of sin.

If Indra is associated in the Veda with the domain of physical valour and command of external nature, Varuṇa is the Vedic god who is principally connected with the spiritual domain. The following half-verse (RV. VII. 83. 9 a) brings out this point clearly :

वृत्राण्यन्यः समिथेषु जिघ्नते व्रतान्यन्यो अभि रक्षते सदा ।

Varuṇa stands out pre-eminently in the Ṛgveda as the custodian of justice watching the conduct of men, as a shepherd over his herds (RV. VII. 49. 3), and no creature can even wink without him (RV. II. 28. 6). For this purpose, he has spies set everywhere. Varuṇa perceives all that exists within Heaven and Earth, and all that is beyond, so that a man cannot escape from

word occurs but *twice* in the RV (VII. 21, 5 ; X 99. 3) ; the former of these texts ends thus : *mā s'is'nadevāḥ apigur ṛtaṁ naḥ*, 'let not the lewd wretches approach our sacrifice'' ; and the last line of the second runs : *anarvā yac chatadurasya vedo ghnañ chis'nadevān abhi varpasā bhūt*, 'when smiting the lascivious wretches, the irresistible god by art made himself the master of the wealth of (the city) with a hundred portals '. The context in which the word occurs in the Ṛgveda thus shows that it is possible to agree with Muir when he suggests that, whatever be the exact meaning of the word, it must have an allusion to the non-Aryan tribes who did not observe the Aryan rituals, and were hence hated by the latter. For a full discussion of the meaning of this word, see Muir, *op. cit*,, IV. 406 ff.

him even by flying far beyond the sky.[1] He is omniscient, knowing as he does the flight of birds in the sky, the path of ships in the ocean, and the course of the far travelling wind, and as he beholds all the secret things that have been or shall be done.[2] The divine omniscience of Varuṇa has been excellently brought out in the following hymn [3] from the Atharvaveda :

बृहन्नेषामधिष्ठाता अन्तिकादिव पश्यति ।
य स्तायन्मन्यते चरन्त्सर्वं देवा इदं विदुः ॥
यस्तिष्ठति चरति यश्च वञ्चति यो निलायं चरति यः प्रतङ्कम् ।
द्वौ संनिषद्य यन्मन्त्रयेते राजा तद्वेद वरुणस्तृतीयः ॥
उतेयं भूमिर्वरुणस्य राज्ञ उतासौ द्यौर्बृहती दूरे अन्ता ।
उतो समुद्रौ वरुणस्य कुक्षी उतास्मिन्नल्प उदके निलीनः ॥
उत यो द्यामतिसर्पात्परस्तान्न स मुच्यातै वरुणस्य राज्ञः ।
दिव स्पशः प्रचरन्तीदमस्य सहस्राक्षा अति पश्यन्ति भूमिम् ॥
सर्वं तद्राजा वरुणो वि चष्टे यदन्तरा रोदसी यत्परस्तात् ।
संख्याता अस्य निमिषो जनानामक्षानिव श्वघ्नी नि मिनोति तानि ॥
ये ते पाशा वरुण सप्तसप्त त्रेधा तिष्ठन्ति विषिता रुशन्तः ।
छिनन्तु सर्वे अनृतं वदन्तं यः सत्यवाद्यति तं सृजन्तु ॥

"The mighty Lord on high, our deeds, as if at hand espies ;

[1] AV. IV. 16. 4, 5.
[2] RV. I. 25. 7, 9, 11.
[3] AV. IV. 16. 1—6.

The gods know all men do, though men would fain their deeds disguise.
Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place to place,
Or hides him in his secret cell,—the gods his movements trace.
Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,
King Varuṇa is there, a third, and all their schemes are known.
This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies;
Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies.
Whoever far beyond the sky should think his way to wing,
He could not there elude the grasp of Varuṇa, the king.
His spies descending from the skies glide all this world around,
Their thousand eyes all-scanning sweep to earth's remotest bound.
Whate'er exists in Heaven and Earth, whate'er beyond the skies,
Before the eyes of Varuṇa, the king, unfolded lies.
The ceaseless winkings all he counts of every mortal's eyes:
He wields this universal frame, as gamester throws his dice.
Those knotted nooses which thou fling'st, O God, the bad to snare,
All liars let them overtake, but all the truthful spare." [1]

[1] Muir, *op. cit.*, V. 64 n.

Varuṇa is frequently spoken of as the preserver of *Ṛta*, or as the spring of *Ṛta*. This word denotes *three* ideas in the Ṛgveda which are mutually connected.

First of all, *Ṛta* represents the "Cosmic Order," the principle which rules over the world and Nature. The regular recurrence of the natural phenomena, the rising and setting of the Sun, the coming of dawns, are all regulated by *Ṛta*. Even the gods are said to be born of Ṛta (*ṛtajāta*), to be observing and loving Ṛta (*ṛtajña, ṛtayu, ṛtavān*). The best things in Nature are the creations of Varuṇa :

वनेषु व्य१न्तरिक्षं ततान वाजमर्वत्सु पय उस्रियासु ।
हृत्सु क्रतुं वरुणो अप्स्व१ग्निं दिवि सूर्यमदधात्सोममद्रौ ॥ [1]

"The Air hath Varuṇa placed among the tree-tops,
Milk in the cows and strength in the swift horses,
Wisdom in hearts and fire within the waters,
In Heaven the Sun and Soma on the mountain." [2]

From this, *Ṛta* comes to denote the correctness and regularity of the cult of worship or sacrifice. There is some principle which guides and regulates the different aspects of the sacrifices, like the coming of the gods and the offering of oblations, and that is *Ṛta*.

Last comes the third phase in the domain of the moral conduct of man, the ethical law which every righteous man must observe on pain of meeting with punishment if he fails to do so.[3]

[1] RV. V. 85. 2.

[2] Griswold, *Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 135.

[3] For an excellent analysis of the Vedic conception of *Ṛta* on these lines, see Griswold, *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 132 ff.

Closely connected with Varuṇa in respect of guarding the moral order of the universe, is Aditi who is conceived of by the Vedic seers as the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa,[1] and of Aryaman also.[2] There are other gods who are often interceded to forgive Sin, but the power to release from it seems to be more closely connected with Varuṇa[3] and his mother Aditi. Thus Varuṇa (RV. I. 24. 15), Agni (RV. IV. 12. 4) and Savitṛ (RV. V. 82. 6) are besought to free from guilt against Aditi. Aditi, Mitra and Varuṇa are implored to forgive Sin (RV. II. 27. 14), and Aditi and Aryaman to loosen the bonds of Sin (RV. VII. 93. 7).

A good number of words are used in the Ṛgveda to denote Sin and inequity. Among these, the words *Pāpa*, *Aghas*, *Enas*, *Aṁhas(-ti)*, *Āgas*, *Durita*, and *Nirṛti* show that Sin was conceived by the early Aryans as 'a fall from a higher to a lower moral state, a deviation from the path of duty, a missing of the mark of excellence once set before the mental vision.'[4] The term *Pāpa* comes from the root *pat*, 'to fall down', and the remaining, except *Nirṛti* come from roots signifying first "to go", then "to go astray", "miss the mark." *Nirṛti* derived from the same root which yields *Ṛta*, 'that which is right', must mean 'that which is not right' *i.e.*, a deviation from the right path.[5]

That an actual transgression of the moral and divine laws was also understood by Sin is denoted by words like *Devakilbiṣa*,

[1] RV. VIII. 25 3, X. 36 3; 132. 6.

[2] RV. VIII. 47. 9.

[3] cf. the account given in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VII. 3) of how *S'unaḥs'epa* implores the mercy of the several Vedic gods like Agni, Indra, As'vins, and Prajāpati, and how he is directed by all these gods to approach Varuṇa, for he alone has the power to excuse him and release him from the sacrificial stake.

[4] M. Phillips, *Teaching of the Vedas*, p. 143.

[5] *Ibid*; The *Nirukta* derives the word from *ṛ* with the preposition *nir*, and so does Grassmann (*Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 733).

Duṣkṛta, *Avadya* and *Rapas* which also are used in the Ṛgveda as names of Sin. The seers also explicitly state that they have, by their sin, broken divine laws and supplicate to the gods for mercy.[1]

Sin is often likened to a 'bondage' or 'rope' from which the sinner has to effect a release. The terms used in the Ṛgveda to denote this idea are *Pāśa*, *Rajju*, *Setu*, *Prasiti* and *Bandha*. Varuṇa is thus called on to take away the sin of his devotee, like a rope from a calf,[2] and to lift the highest rope, draw off the lowest, and remove the middle.[3] Aditi is implored to deliver the devotees from the mouth of the wolves, like a bound thief.[4]

Sin is also a 'heavy burden' which only the gods can take away (RV. II. 29. 1), a 'thick darkness' which forgiveness alone can dispel, (RV. II. 27. 14) and a 'sea' or 'flood' which can be crossed only by a divine boat.[5]

If the Vedic seer is conscious that he will incur the displeasure of his god if he perpetrate Sin, it may be asked why he should at all sin. To this he answers that, as a human being, it is natural to sin when lured away by temptations which are irresistible. He, therefore, prays to his gods to excuse whatever sin he has committed, whether it is through weakness or through unconsciousness. To Varuṇa the seer says that it is not his own doing that made him sin, but only the influence of an intoxicating draught, of poison or dice, or through thoughtlessness.[6] Savitṛ is requested to render his devotees sinless, whatever be the offence committed by them

[1] RV. I. 25. 2; VII. 89. 5; 87. 7.
[2] RV. II. 28. 6.
[3] RV. I. 24. 15.
[4] RV. VIII. 56. 14.
[5] RV. I. 99. 1; VIII. 18. 17; X. 63.
[6] RV. VII. 86. 6.

by want of thought against the divine race, by feebleness of understanding, by violence after the manner of men, and either against gods or men.[1] Though the worshippers err through human weakness and infirmities, the Maruts are implored to keep far away from them their blazing weapons (RV. VII. 57. 4).

It was also believed at this time that a man suffered not merely for his own Sins, but as well for those committed by his parents. Varuṇa is sought to release his supplicant, not merely from the Sins committed by him, but also from those committed by his fathers. (RV. VII. 86. 5). In another place, the seer prays to Mitra and Varuṇa to see that he is not punished for offences committed by another (RV. VII. 52. 2). In a verse in the Atharvaveda (V. 30. 4) which is used to secure longevity, the man is assured of freedom from his affliction, even though he might be lying prostrate through sin committed by his father or mother.

So much for the general nature of Sin. These seers also specify certain types of conduct as immoral, and as those which are to be avoided by all who would like to be happy, and in the favour of the great gods. 'Gambling' seems to have been widely prevalent at this period, and the Ṛgveda has one entire hymn which speaks of the disastrous consequences of this vicious pastime. In this hymn,[2] the gambler who has succumbed to the fascination of the dice, bemoans the ruin that has fallen on him and his family. His relations forsake him, and his very wife, who was formerly very much attached to him, leaves him and goes astray. Having gambled away all his money and finding himself starving, the man takes up

[1] RV. IV. 54. 3.

[2] RV. X. 34; for an excellent metrical rendering of this hymn, see Muir, *op. cit.*, V. 427 ff.

to stealing. He sees his neighbours and their well-ordered homes, and repents that, by his folly, he has lost all that happiness to which he was also once entitled.

The gods hate falsehood and punish all untruth, and the seers frequently pray to the gods, requesting excuse for the Sin committed by them in having spoken untruth. Mitra and Varuṇa are said to conquer all falsehood, and closely cleave unto the law eternal (RV. I. 152. 1), and Varuṇa is considered to discriminate between truth and false-hood (RV. VII. 49. 3).

Stealing was abhorred at this time, and dishonesty in business was always deprecated. Pūṣan is the Vedic god of travellers, corresponding to Mercury in Grecian Mythology, and he is very often asked to drive away from the path of his worshippers, the way-layer, the thief and the robber (RV. I. 42. 3), and Indra is entreated 'not to take advantage of his devotees like a dealer' (RV. I. 33. 3).

(Among other things considered criminal in the Vedic age are sorcery and witchcraft (RV. VII. 104. 5, 8, 24 & 25), seduction and adultery,[1] disobedience to parents, and want of peace and concord in the family.) It is but natural for worshippers of gods like the Vedic Aryans to detest those devoting themselves to the worship of evil forces. Such is the hatred of the Vedic seer towards sorcery and witchcraft that he cries out in one place *Adyā murīya yadi yātudhāno asmi*,[2] 'May I die today if I am a sorcerer'. There is one beautiful hymn in the Atharvaveda (III. 30) which is meant as a benediction to effect domestic concord and felicity :

सहृदयं सांमनुस्यमविद्वेषं कृणोमि वः ।
अन्यो अन्यमुभि हर्यत वत्सं जातमिवाघ्न्या ॥

[1] RV. I. 167. 4 ; II. 29. 1 ; X. 34. 3.
[2] RV. VII. 104. 15

अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु संमनाः ।
जाया पत्ये मधुमतीं वाचं वदतु शान्तिवाम् ॥
मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विक्षन्मा स्वसारमुत स्वसा ।
सम्यञ्चः सव्रता भूत्वा वाचं वदत भद्रया ॥
येन देवा न वियन्ति नो च विद्विषते मिथः ।
तत्कृण्मो ब्रह्म वो गृहे संज्ञानं पुरुषेभ्यः ॥

The last hymn of the Ṛgveda (X. 191) betrays a more ambitious aim when it seeks to bring about concord, amity and peace among all people :

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥
समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Great stress was laid in the Vedic period on the importance of following the tradition set up by the ancestors of old, and it is quite possible that neglect of this was considered sinful :

सहस्तोमाः सहछन्दस आवृतः सहप्रमा ऋषयः सप्त दैव्याः ।
पूर्वेषां पन्थामनुदृश्य धीरा अन्वालेभिरे रथ्यो३ न रश्मीन् ॥
इदं नम ऋषिभ्यः पूर्वजेभ्यः पूर्वेभ्यः पथिकृद्भ्यः ॥ [1]

[1] RV. X. 130. 7; 14. 15 cd.

Sin, being a violation of the divine law, must necessarily meet with punishment. As a penalty, the sinner often lost the favour of his god. Vasiṣṭha once unconsciously and ignorantly violated the decree of Varuṇa, and full of pious grief, painfully recalls the time when he had the honour of a pleasure boat-drive on the sea alone with Varuṇa, of being a guest of Varuṇa, and of having access to his thousand-gated house. But, once he sinned, he lost all friendship with him.[1]

The sinner was also punished, and the favourite punishment of Varuṇa seems to consist in inflicting disease (*yakṣma*).[2] The nature of the punishment ought always to be in accordance with the nature of the god who punishes, and it is only natural that Vedic Aryans considered *dropsy* as the peculiar infliction of Varuṇa, the lord of waters.[3] A member of the family of Vasiṣṭha was fettered with disease (*pās'a*) and the wise assured him that he must be a sinner, because his illness was proof that Varuṇa, who hates sin, was angry with him. The victim supplicates for mercy that he may be relieved of his piteous affliction :

> " Since like one tottering I move,
> O Slinger, like inflated skin,
> Be gracious, Mighty Lord, and spare." [4]

Expiation for sin was also considered possible, seeing that it is only human nature to go wrong. This was frequently done by begging forgiveness of those gods who were believed to be custodians of the moral order of the universe. As has been mentioned already, the idea of sin seems to be

[1] RV. VII. 88.
[2] RV. I. 122. 9, cf. RV. VIII. 20. 26 where Maruts are requested to cure him who is sick (*āturasya*) on account of his wickedness (*rapas*).
[3] cf. the story of Haris'candra in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VII. 3), where Varuṇa inflicts dropsy on Haris'candra for breaking his promise ; cf *supra*, p. 178 n.
[4] RV. VII. 89. 2 ; cf., *supra*, p. 178.

much more closely connected with Aditi and her son Varuṇa than with any other god. The very etymology of the word *Aditi*, 'unbinding', 'bondlessness', comes from *diti*, 'binding,' derived from the root *dā*, 'to bind".[1] Not merely is Aditi very frequently[2] implored to release the wrong-doer from sin, other gods like Varuṇa, Agni, and Savitṛ are requested to free the sinner from his wrong towards Aditi. Aditi is said to be the mother of eight sons and that with seven of them, excepting Sūrya, she approached the earlier age (*pūrvyaṁ yugam*) [RV. X. 72. 8, 9].

As a moral governor, Varuṇa is the paramount god in the Ṛgveda, and sin is most frequently confessed to him and his forgiveness sought. He is said to bind the sinners with fetters (*pāśāḥ*)[3] which seem to be specifically distinctive of him.[4] They are cast seven-fold and three-fold, ensnaring the man who tells lies, passing by him who speaks truth (AV. IV. 16. 6). Together with Mitra, Varuṇa is a dispeller, a hater and a punisher of falsehood.[5] However rigorous Varuṇa may be in his punishment, he is still merciful and gracious to the penitent. The god is just, yet merciful, a judge, but yet a father. Very frequently, Varuṇa is besought to lose the sinner from sin and penalty and make him once again his favourite :

अर्यम्यं वरुण मित्र्यं वा सखायं वा सदमिद् भ्रातरं वा ।
वेशं वा नित्यं वरुणारणं वा यत्सीमागश्चकृमा शिश्रथस्तत् ॥[6]

[1] Benfey (*Orient und Occident*, I. 33) treats *Aditi* as a proper name, and explains it as denoting sinlessness (Muir, *op. cit.*, V 46).

[2] RV. I. 162. 22 ; II. 27. 14 ; VII. 93. 7 ; X 100 etc

[3] RV. I. 24. 15, 25. 21 ; VI. 74. 4 ; X. 85. 24.

[4] Only *once* in the RV. (V. 2. 7) is *Agni* ever implored to loosen the fetters of his worshippers.

[5] RV. I. 152. 1 ; VII. 60. 5 , 66. 13.

[6] RV. V. 85. 7.

कितवासो यद्रिरिपुर्न दीवि यद्वा घा सत्यमुत यन्न विद्म ।
सर्वा ता वि ष्य शिथिरेव देवाऽधा ते स्याम वरुण प्रियासः ॥ [1]

"Against a friend, companion or a brother, a fellow-tribesman, or against a stranger, whatever tresspass we have perpetrated, do thou, O Varuṇa, from that release us.

If we, like those that play at dice, have cheated, have really sinned, or done amiss unwitting, cast all these sins away, as from us loosened; so, măy we, Varuṇa, be thine own beloved."

Savitṛ who travels by an upward and by a downward path, comes fiom a distance and removes all sin.[2] He is requested to free man from sin committed against the divine race by want of thought, by feebleness of understanding, or by violence after the manner of men (RV. IV. 54. 3),

Indra is requested not to slay his devotees for one sin, or for two, or for three or for many.[3]

Sūrya is requested, at his rising, to declare men sinless to Mitrā-Varuṇa and other gods.[4]

The Ādityas watch carefully each evil deed perpetrated by man and, with strict justice, punish him (RV. II. 27). They lay hold on wrong with the wrath of their spirit (RV. I. 139. 2), and bind wrong with many bonds not to be overstepped by the deceitful man (RV. VII. 65. 3). But once the sinner turns back from sin, they put far away the evil done by the penitent, openly or in secret, and prolong his life (RV. VIII. 56. 17).

[1] RV. V. 85. 8.

[2] RV. I. 35. 3 ; 115. 6.

[3] RV. VIII. 45. 33-4

[4] RV. VII. 60. 1 , 62. 2.

Uṣas is said to bring about sinlessness (*anāgāstvam*) [RV. X. 35. 2, 3].

Soma is implored to preserve his worshippers from sin (RV. I. 91. 5), and to forgive every error of his adorer mercifully, even as a father pardons his son.[1] "Though we transgress thy firm decree, so often, be merciful to us," says the worshipper, "and kind and gracious" (RV. VIII. 48. 9).

The As'vins are besought to wipe off the sins of their devotees, and to prolong their life (RV. I. 157. 4).

Agni is solicited to preserve his adorers by knowledge from sin (RV. I. 36. 14, 15), to remove from them all inequity, all sin and all evil thought (RV. IV. 11. 6).

Dyāvāpṛthivī are invoked for forgiveness of sin (RV. X. 35. 2, 3).

"May our sins be removed or repented of" (*apa naḥ s'os'ucad agham*) is the burden of one entire hymn in the Ṛgveda (I. 97) which is addressed to Agni.

Besides praying for and obtaining the forgiveness of gods, there are several other methods of expiation by means of which the Vedic seer sought to wipe off his sin. Sin is often considered to be transferable; the gods are said to transfer the guilt of the blood of the sacrifice to one man after another, until it rested finally with the slayer of an embryo (*bhrūṇahantā*), the most guilty of sinners,[2] and man, following their example, seeks to transfer his sins :

सनेम तत्सुसनिता सनित्वभिर्वयं जीवा जीवपुत्रा अनागसः ।
ब्रह्मद्विषो विष्वगेनो भरेरत तद्देवानामवो अद्या वृणीमहे ॥[3]

[1] RV. VIII. 48. 2; I. 91. 4; 179. 5, VIII. 68. 8.

[2] *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṁhitā*, IV. 1. 9.

[3] RV. X. 36. 9. For a fuller account of the different methods employed by the Vedic seers to rid themselves of their sin, see Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, I. 264 ff.; *ERE.*, XI. 560 ff.

From the above account of various methods of expiating Sin, it is clear that Sin, to the Vedic Indian, was an external accretion, which could be removed by the application of adequate means, prayer or rituals. They were aware that it is natural for man to sin, either through lack of self-control or through unconsciousness; but this did not mean to them that man is always a sinner and that it is his essential nature to go wrong. To them, as it is to later Indian thinkers, man seems to be by nature divine, but a demon only temporarily, through accident. "It was not our own will, Varuṇa," says the seer, "but some seduction which led us astray,—wine, anger, dice or thoughtlessness. The stronger perverts the weaker, even sleep occasions sin." (RV. VII. 86. 6).

It is necessary in this context to review the opinions of some of the best orientalists on the Vedic conception of Sin. It has very often been remarked that the Vedic conception of Sin is extremely simple, and that very little stress is laid in the Veda on the moral side of man. Weber holds that the religious notion of Sin is wanting altogether, and submissive gratitude to the gods is as yet quite foreign to the Indian in the Vedic Age."[1] He points out that when the Vedic worshipper says to his god 'Give me, and I will render to thee,' it is quite clear that he thinks he has a right to divine assistance, and that the relation between him and his God is one of exchange, not of grace. Weber is certainly right in pointing out that the relation between God and man in Vedic India was one of 'reciprocity, frank, unconditional reciprocity,'[2] but this does not prove that the notion of sin did not at all occupy the mind of man at this age. The very conception of gods in the Veda is proof of the unmistakable elevation

[1] *History of Indian Literature*, p 38.

[2] M. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 184.

of sentiment expressed therein.[1] A people who could conceive of gods who are good, just and not deceitful, cannot themselves be rid of all those qualities; also, a religion like that of the Ṛgveda which sees along side of it low practices like sorcery, witchcraft and magic, but refuses to adopt them, must undoubtedly be a moral religion. True that the Vedic seers demand of their gods all their worldly needs, as though it is purely a matter of right; but when we hear them define a pious man as one who makes *soma* flow in abundance, while, the reprobate is one who is penurious towards the gods whose worship is man's first duty, it has to be accepted that these people had enough devotion and respect towards their gods. Moreover, the very important place occupied by Varuṇa and Aditi in the Vedic pantheon—the first as the guardian of *Ṛta*, and the second as the most important forgiver of sin—and the very frequent descriptions of the Vedic seers approaching these two and other gods, conceived by them as guardians of the moral order, for forgiveness of their sins, most unmistakably point out that these Vedic minstrels did certainly feel the weight of other things besides multiplicity of offerings or punctilious observance of rituals, and that the standard of morality conceived by them is really exalted and comprehensive.[2]

Phillips[3] quotes with general approval on his part the view of the author of the *Sacred Poetry of Early Religions* who remarks: "Of that moral conviction, that moral enthusiasm for goodness and justice, that moral hatred of wrong and evil, that zeal for righteousness, that anguish of penitence, which has elsewhere marked religious poetry,

[1] M. Barth, *Religions of India*. pp. 32 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*,

[3] *Teaching of the Vedas*, p. 140.

there is singularly little trace in the Vedic hymns". He also points out[1] that drinking of *soma* and *surā*, polygamy, remarriage of widows, adult women remaining unmarried, and plundering and destruction of non-Aryan tribes were not at all considered sinful in the Vedic period. The Vedic Aryans are convicted by Phillips especially for their racial intolerance,[2] but it has to be pointed out that this is a trait which is not peculiar to them but which is found in all races and at all times. Moreover, as Barth has pointed out,[3] it is only with the simple conviction that the non-Aryan ruins himself with impiety if he does not worship the Vedic gods, that the Vedic seer consigned him to divine wrath so that, being afraid of that, he may improve his conduct at least thereafter. The first objection that morality is not sufficiently recognised has already been answered in replying to Weber; but when it is complained that drinking of *soma*, *surā*, polygamy and the like were not considered criminal by these people, it must be said in reply that we have no justification in applying our code of morality in judging the actions of a people who lived thousands of years ago. "In matters of social life, it is not easy," as Roth[4] holds, "to pass sentence upon so remote an antiquity, since we know not the precise rule by which they are to be judged." It is also possible to see that the domestic life of these ancient people, the government of their house-hold, as also the relation between the sexes at this time, deserves neither special praise nor special blame.[5] True that these people do not deserve the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 148 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[4] *J.A.O.S.*, III. 340.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 339 f.

praise of continency, but at the same time it has to be admitted that they were not lustful or sensuous either. They had a passion for dice, but they themselves recognised it to be a vice. Moreover, the fact must also be considered that different nations in the world have different codes of morality, that what is virtue in one place may be dubbed vice in another, and that the judgment of morality is very often a purely subjective affair.

Mitchell[1] feels that the Vedas are in no way exempt from some of the worst outrages on morality which we frequently meet with in the Purāṇas. He points out that in the character of the sacred ṛṣis, there is much that is morally repulsive; the ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha is assailed by the house-dog when about to steal grain, and a dialogue is given in the Veda in which Yama endeavours to seduce his twin-sister Yamī. Roth has already replied to these allegations; the first story has been pointed out by him as a clear concoction of the priests who were obviously unable to understand the significance of Vasiṣṭha's entry into Varuṇa's house at night;[2] the second story proceeds from not understanding the dialogue of Yama and Yamī correctly. It is Colebrooke that was first responsible for this mistake, and the wrong version of the story was adopted by Mitchell without any verification on his part. Colebrooke wrote: "A very singular passage occurs in another place (of the Ṛgveda) containing a dialogue between Yama and his twin-sister Yamunā, whom he endeavours to seduce; but his offers are rejected by her with virtuous expostulation."[3] Colebrooke, otherwise a very accurate student of Sanskrit, fails to see that, in the hymn in

[1] *J.B.B.R.A.S.* (1847), XI. 406, cited by Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

[2] Roth, *Ibid.*, p. 337.

[3] *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. 402.

question, it is not Yama that makes overtures but only Yamī, and that even her attempt is not to seduce, but only to marry him. Moreover, Yama and Yamī are the primeval ancestors, the originators of man, corresponding to Adam and Eve in Christian mythology. As we can understand from the Vedic dialogue, Yama points out that it is criminal for a brother to share his bed with his sister, even overlooking the fact that, 'if these two did not unite, the birth of human beings would be impossible.' Granting that they united, it is easily seen that they committed no special crime, for, however legal the sexual connection between Adam and Eve may be, their children at least must have been incestuous.[1]

Also, it is very often seen that our condemnation of mythical heroes, gods and seers proceeds from a failure on our part to understand the anthropomorphical nature of the stories connected with them.[2] The Vedic poets often compare the behaviour of the solar and storm-gods, and of the light and dark phenomena, to the activities of human beings, and it is necessary that one should bear in mind this fact before he makes an attempt to understand the several mythical stories and legends.

Keith[3] feels that there is no great stress laid on the moral quality of the gods, and that the sense of Sin is very feebly represented in the hymns; confessions are no doubt made, but it is only to certain gods like Varuṇa, Aditi, and the Ādityas; there is, side by side, the view that Sin is only an external affair, a pollution or a disease which can easily be removed through pity of the gods or by the application of

[1] *cf.* Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 335 f.

[2] For an elaboration of this theme, see my paper *Kumārila's Contribution to Philology and Mythology* in the *Poona Orientalist*, V. 65 ff.

[3] *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, I. 244 ff.; *ERE.*, XI. 560 ff.; A. A. Macdonell, *Lectures on Comparative Religion*, pp. 62, 66.

certain magical methods. There is no searching of the heart, and no contrite soul which is accorded forgiveness.[1] The Vedic seers fail to make much distinction between neglect of ceremonial duties, natural defects, and real offences against the moral law; the only difference made here is as regards the gravity of crimes; the Yajurveda, for instance, does not seem to make much distinction, except in degree, between a man who has failed to perform his *sandhyā-vandana* before sunrise, between one who has married before his elder brother, and one who has slain a man, a brahmin or an embryo.[2] Polytheists that the Vedic seers were, it was but natural for them to imagine that each god had his own individual jurisdiction. This idea becomes quite clear on perusal of the hymn RV. VIII. 29 which is a sort of *brahmodya* wherein the distinguishing characteristics of each god are mentioned, and the listener or reader is expected to recognise the god; *Indra* is thus the incomparable defender of the Vedic people against their enemies, and *Pūṣan* the guardian of the high-ways and one who secures lost-property; *Rudra* is the talented physician, and *Agni* is always associated with wisdom. Similarly, the moral sphere seems to be essentially under the custody of *Varuṇa* and those other gods considered to be similar in nature to him, and it is only natural that the Vedic seer should implore to these gods for forgiveness of Sin, even as he requests *Indra* to destroy his enemies, *Pūṣan* to secure his lost cow, or *Rudra* to cure his disease. The fact that only a few of the Vedic gods are implored to remove Sin does not, therefore, prove that Sin was not seriously regarded by the

[1] Lefever, *Summaries of Papers* submitted to VIII All India Oriental Conference (1935), p. 3.

[2] B. Delbruck, *Die Indogermanischen Verwandtschaftsnamen*, pp. 200 ff., cited by A. B. Keith, *ERE*., XI. 561.

Vedic seers. It is also pointed out that not much difference was made in Vedic India between breach of duty and moral delinquency ; this fact, so far from proving a very light conception of Sin, proves, on the other hand, that the Vedic seers were men of such stern discipline that even a breach of religious duty was considered by them as serious as the most heinous crime like *bhrūṇahatya*. To view Sin as an external pollution or a disease which can be removed, cannot mean recognition of a very low standard of morality. Indian thought has always considered that man is by nature divine, and that all his delinquencies are as a result of his weakness which is but temporary and accidental. However much opposed this view may be to Christian conceptions of Sin, its philosophical value cannot be denied ; the moment man realises that, through a momentary weakness, he has fallen from his divinity, he rushes to his God and implores for a riddance of his Sin. No one who is not conscious that he is a sinner and who does not feel the weight of his crime, can be expected to pray for deliverance from Sin, and when the Vedic seer is seen to approach Varuṇa, the guardian of moral order, with the fullest repentance and praying piteously to be absolved from all his sins, it is impossible to accept that there is 'no searching of the heart or real contrition' in Vedic India. It is difficult to deny both these to the suppliant who falls at the feet of Varuṇa, craving for his mercy, and who once even challenges him to point out the sin committed by him (RV. VII. 86. 34). The verses addressed to Varuṇa on this occasion argue for the most elevated expression of the sense of Sin possessed by the Vedic Aryans.[1]

[1] This is accepted by Keith (*ERE.*, XI. 560) also ; see also Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 123 ; Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 34 ; Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, I. 41 ; Roth, *J.A.O.S.*, III. 346.

A study of the Vedic idea of morality would not be complete if the eschatological conceptions of these people are not also taken into account. The good men go after death, we are told, to the Heaven of Viṣṇu or Yama, as their merit permits them, but, regarding the destiny of the wicked, there are not at all any definite indications in the Ṛgveda. Roth[1] felt that the evil-doers should have either been condemned to live on for an indefinite time their evil life, or that their individuality should have been extinguished by death; feeling that the former alternative would be more in accordance with 'philosophy rather than with the spirit of remote antiquity,' he chose the latter as the more probable one. This view of Roth, that the punishment of the wicked is only their annihilation, is plausible, for this accords with the stress frequently laid in the Veda on longevity as the supreme aim of man.[2] But it is not possible to say that no other punishment was conceived of by these people, for we often hear of the 'deep abyss' (*Vavra*, *Gādha*) or the 'lowest darkness' (*Tamas*) to which different kinds of criminals are consigned. A few words of the Ṛgveda need consideration in this context.

Vavra occurs in the Ṛgveda both in the masculine and neuter genders; in the former gender it occurs thrice (I. 52. 3; 168. 2; X. 8. 7), and means 'one who divides,' or 'one who beseeches;' in the latter gender, it occurs five times (IV. 1. 13; V. 31. 3; 32. 8; VII. 104. 3, 17), and means 'one that covers' or an 'abyss' (*tiefe Grube, Tiefe*).[3] In the latter sense, the word occurs in the following two verses:

इन्द्रासोमा दुष्कृतो वव्रे अन्तरनारम्भणे तमसि प्र विध्यतम् ।
यथा नातः पुनरेकश्चनोदयत्तद्वामस्तु सहसे मन्युमच्छवः ॥[4]

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 344 ff.
[2] Keith, *ERE.*, XI. 843.
[3] Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 1226.
[4] RV. VII. 104. 3.

प्र या जिगाति खर्गलेव नक्तमप द्रुहा तन्वं१ गूहमाना ।
वव्राँ अनन्ताँ अव सा पदीष्ट ग्रावाणो घ्नन्तु रक्षस उपब्दैः ॥[1]

In the first verse, Indra and Soma are requested to chastise the malignant Rākṣasas and to plunge them in surrounding (*Vavre*) and inextricable darkness,[2] so that not one of them may again issue from it. In the second, the seer wishes to see that the demons prowling at night like an owl, covering her person, may fall headlong down into the unbounded caverns (*Vavrān*). Grassmann understands the third pāda of the second verse to mean *sinke tief in bodenlose Brunnen.*[3]

The word *Gabhīra* occurs, by itself, eight times in the Ṛgveda and the word *Pada*, forty-six times. The following verse where these two words occur compounded is of interest in the present context :

अभ्रातरो न योषणो व्यन्तः पतिरिपो न जनयो दुरेवाः ।
पापासः सन्तो अनृता असत्या इदं पदमजनता गभीरम् ॥[4]

Here, the wicked who are false in thought (*anṛtāḥ*) and who are false in speech (*asatyāḥ*), like brotherless maidens who go astray and married women who are unfaithful to their husbands, are said to give birth to the deep abyss (*gabhīraṁ padam*).[5]

[1] RV. VII. 104. 17.

[2] This is Wilson's translation of *Vavre* which Sāyaṇa interprets to mean *vārake*. But Grassmann understands by the word an 'abyss' (*Tiefe*) and interprets the verse to be an address to Indra and Soma who are requested to plunge headlong the evil-doers into the darkness of the deepest underground well (*Rigveda*, I. 380).

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] RV. IV. 5. 5.

[5] Sāyaṇa equates this word with Hell (*narakasthāna*) and, according to Grassmann, it means an 'unfathomable' or 'inexhaustible' place (*unergründlich, unerschöpflich*).

Gādha occurs nine times in the Ṛgveda in various case-forms. Sāyaṇa understands the word in a number of senses such as 'an elevated place' (*dhiṣṇyaṁ pradeśam*), 'a place' (*sthāna* or *sthiti*), 'depth', 'water', and 'that which is being done.' Grassmann[1] understands the word to mean *Ort im Wasser, wo man festen Fuss fassen kann* (*wol von gadh, festhalten, sich anklammern*), *seichte Stelle, Furt.* In the *Nirukta*, the word occurs twice;[2] it is there derived from the root *gāh*, and is used once in the sense of 'fordable' and another time to mean 'shallow.' In the sense of 'depth', the word is used thrice in the Ṛgveda but the present verse only needs consideration at present:

इमे दिवो अनिमिषा पृथिव्याश्चिकित्वांसो अचेतसं नयन्ति ।
प्रव्राजे चिन्नद्यो गाधमस्ति पारं नो अस्य विष्पितस्य पर्षन् ॥[3]

Mitra and Varuṇa are here invoked and besought to lead their worshippers to the opposite shore of the bottom which lies in the lowest depth (*gādha*) of the river.

Adhas is found five times in the Ṛgveda and always means 'below' (*adhastāt*=*unten, hinab*).[4] It occurs but *once* (II. 11) in the *Nirukta*, and is used there also in the same sense. Of its occurrences in the Ṛgveda the following verse is noteworthy:

परः सो अस्तु तन्वा३ तना च तिस्रः पृथिवीरधो अस्तु विश्वाः ।
प्रति शुष्यतु यशो अस्य देवा यो नो दिवा दिप्सति यश्च नक्तम् ॥[5]

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 395.
[2] *Nirukta*, II. 2, 24.
[3] RV. VII. 60. 7.
[4] Grassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[5] RV. VII. 104. 11.

In this verse, the seers request the gods to see that their adversary is cast down below (*adhaḥ*) all the three worlds.

Karta occurs four times in all in the Ṛgveda in the various case-forms. The following are the passages:

त्वं सूरो हरितो रामयो नॄन् भरच्चक्रमेतशो नायमिन्द्र ।
प्रास्य पारं नवतिं नाव्यानामपि कर्तमवर्तयोऽयज्यून् ॥[1]

अर्वाञ्चो अद्या भवता यजत्रा आ वो हार्दि भयमानो व्ययेयम् ।
त्राध्वं नो देवा निजुरो वृकस्य त्राध्वं कर्तादवपदो यजत्राः ॥[2]

ऋतस्य गोपा न दभाय सुक्रतुस्त्री ष पवित्रा हृद्य१न्तरा दधे ।
विद्वान्त्स विश्वा भुवनाभि पश्यत्यवाजुष्टान्विध्यति कर्ते अव्रतान् ॥[3]

ऋतस्य तन्तुर्विततः पवित्र आ जिह्वाया अग्रे वरुणस्य मायया ।
धीराश्चित्तत्समिनक्षन्त आशताऽत्रा कर्तमव पदात्सप्रभुः ॥[4]

Grassmann understands[5] the word in all these four passages to mean 'a cavity' (*Grube*) or 'a hole' (*Loch*) and derives the word from the root *kṛt*, 'to cut' or 'carve' (*schneiden*). But in all the four verses Sāyaṇa understands it only in the sense of 'activity' or 'duty' (*karma*), though it has to be admitted that his explanation of these verses is far from satisfactory. According to Sāyaṇa, the first verse is an address to Indra who is requested to do his duty (*kartam avartayaḥ*) by driving away his non-worshippers past the ninety rivers, and the second, to the Visvedevas who are

[1] RV. I. 121. 13.
[2] RV. II. 29. 6.
[3] RV. IX. 73. 8.
[4] RV. IX. 73. 9.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 316.

implored to protect their worshippers from the evil-doer (*avapadaḥ kartāt*) ; the third verse says that Soma torments those who have no interest in offering him sacrifices (*karte ajuṣṭān*). and, according to the last verse, while the prudent ones who are capable of performing rites attain the dwelling of Soma situated on the tip of the tongue of Varuṇa, he who is incapable of such rites (*kartam aprabhuḥ*) falls down below. It is too readily seen that all these explanations of Sāyaṇa are very much involved and, to some extent, even fantastic. It seems quite reasonable, on the other hand, to understand *Karta* as Grassmann has done and to understand the verses accordingly. The first verse would then mean that Indra drives the godless beyond the ninety rivers and down into the pit (*kartam avartayaḥ*), and the second would be a prayer to the Viśvedevas to save their devotees from falling into the pit (*kartāt avapadaḥ*) ; the third verse says that Soma drives into the pit (*karte vidhyati*) the hated riteless ones, and the fourth verse tells that the man who lacks the supernatural power possessed by those who were able to attain to the world of Soma, sinks into the pit (*kartam avapadāti*).

The word *Vīcī* occurs but *once* in the Ṛgveda, and even then in the instrumental case. The context is given by the following verse :

को अस्य वेद प्रथमस्याह्नः क ईं ददर्श क इह प्र वोचत् ।
बृहन्मित्रस्य वरुणस्य धाम कदु ब्रव आहनो वीच्या नॄन् ॥[1]

There is some difference of opinion in the interpretation of this verse between Sāyaṇa and the majority of Western scholars ; according to the former, Yamī is the speaker and she, in her attempt to induce Yama to accede to her wishes, tells him

[1] RV. X. 10. 6.

that, at that early hour of the day, there could be no one who would spy on what they do, and report it to others. Whether she is justified in saying so or not, she leaves it for the judgment of Yama, who condemns the wrong-doers among men to Hell. Commenting on the verse, Wilson remarks[1] that Sāyaṇa inconsistently makes Yamī the speaker in the last part of the verse at least. Wilson has failed to understand Sāyaṇa's commentary here, because, according to the latter, Yamī is the speaker of the entire verse.

Griffith differs from Sāyaṇa in holding that Yama is the speaker in this verse.[2] According to his interpretation, Yama attempts to refute Yamī's claim[3] that Tvaṣṭṛ intended the very day he created them both that they should live as man and wife, that Heaven and Earth are the witnesses to this ordinance, and that no body dare disobey the commands of the Creator. The reply to this claim by Yamī is contained in the present verse where Yama says that there is no one available who knows of the day when they two were created, who has seen it, and who can declare so. He condemns Yamī for tempting him, and points out to her with awe the stern custodians of moral order, Mitra and Varuṇa, who are ever watchful, and from whom no crime can escape detection.

Both these explanations are interesting and convincing, and it is difficult to point out, on the basis of consistency or accuracy, that either of them is defective. Sāyaṇa, however, has the advantage of the support of tradition for his

[1] Wilson, *Rigveda*, VI. 22 n.

[2] The same view is held by Grassmann (*Rigveda*, II. 297), Muir (*op. cit.*, V. 290), Aufrecht (*Die Hymnen des Rigveda*, II. 497), and Whitney (*Atharva-veda Saṁhitā*, p. 817).

[3] RV. X. 10. 5.

explanation,[1] and may thus be considered to have scored a point over his rivals of the opposite school.

Still greater is the controversy as regards the meaning of the word *Vīcī* which occurs in the last quarter of this verse. Sāyaṇa understands the word in the sense, of 'hell' (*naraka*), while almost all the Western scholars interpret the word differently. Griffith[2] understands the word to mean 'temptingly', and Grassmann[3] in the sense of 'falsely' (*falschlich*). Roth and Böhtlingk[4] explain the word by 'deceit' (*Trug, Verfuhrung*).

The fact that the *Nighaṇṭu* and the *Nirukta* both omit the word *Vīcī* from consideration does not prove that Sāyaṇa's interpretation of the word is not based on tradition, for the Vediccommentator Udgītha[5], who lived centuries before Sāyaṇa, takes the word in an identical sense. Sāyaṇa's explanation, therefore, is based on traditional authority.

Besides, it is clear that, according to native tradition, Yamī is the speaker in the present verse, and when the whole verse is interpreted this way, the meaning given to the word by Grassmann and others cannot fit into the context. To have a cogent sense, we have to understand the word in the sense given to it by Sāyaṇa who, in doing so, follows Udgītha, and

[1] The *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana says, like Sāyaṇa, that Yamī is the speaker in this verse (*Ocitsaḷūnā Yamayamyos saṁvādaḥ, ṣaṣṭhyayugbhir yamī mithunārthaṁ yamaṁ provāca, sa tāṁ navamī ṛgbhir anicchan pratyācaṣṭa*). Among Vedic commentators who lived much earlier than Sāyaṇa, Udgītha and Veṅkatamādhava interpret the verse in the same way; See Udgītha's *commentary on the Ṛgveda*, p. 18 (Lahore Edn.) and *Ṛgvedabhāṣyam* of Veṅkaṭamādhava, *Adyar Library Transcript*, No. XXXVIII. D. 15, pp. 895 ff.

[2] *Rigveda*, II. 393.

[3] *Op. cit.*

[4] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, p. 1290.

[5] *Op. cit.*; curiously enough Veṅkaṭamādhava omits to explain this word in the course of his commentary on this verse (See *Adyar Library Transcript*, XXXVIII. D. 15, p. 869). This may be due to the fact that his main aim in commenting is to give only a summary of each verse.

the interpretation of the word *Vīcī* to mean 'Hell' seems justifiable on the ground that it rests on traditional authority.[1]

Besides what has been noticed above, there is one verse (RV. X. 152. 4) which also needs consideration at present:

वि न इन्द्र मृधो जहि नीचा यच्छ पृतन्यतः ।
यो अस्माँ अभिदासत्यधरं गमया तमः ॥

Indra is requested in this verse to send down to the nether darkness him who seeks to injure his worshippers.

In a recent article[2] where Professor Norman Brown of the University of Pennsylvania attempts to point out what the definite name was by means of which the Vedic people designated the place of punishment for their wicked after death, it is suggested that *Asat* was the name by which this place was called, and that it was meant not for the ordinary sinners whose punishment ended with being bound by Varuṇa's fetters or with incurring the displeasure of the gods, but for those actively anti-divine creatures like the Rākṣasas, the Yātudhānas or the Kimīdins who conspire against the sacrifice, who injure the pious, and who defraud them of the fruit of their good deeds. We are asked to believe that the ordered universe is contrasted in this Saṃhitā with the place of hell, and the difference between the two is that between *Aditi* and *Nirṛti*, between life and death, between the created, ordered and lighted world and the uncreated, unordered and unillumined place of dissolution; the latter is called *Asat* as contrasted with the former which goes by the name of *Sat*. The gods fashioned the orderly universe from the primordial

[1] Sāyaṇa's interpretation here is accepted by Geldner (*Gurupūjākaumudī*, p. 22) who sees in this word a direct reference to Hell, but Keith (*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 410) finds fault with the latter.

[2] Norman Brown, *The Rigvedic Equivalent for Hell*, J.A.O.S. [(June 1941), Vol. LXI, pp. 76-80)].

chaos which is no other than *Asat*, the disordered world of demons. The famous *Nāsadīya* hymn (RV. X. 129) has to be construed in this light, and the Vedic story of the fight between Indra and Vṛtra is no more than an allegorical explanation of the process of the creation of this world. It is true that *Asat* which thus means *Hell* in the Ṛgveda does not mean so later on. The reason for this is that in the conception of *Asat* and *Sat* the philosophers found a dualism which they "resolved into a monism that comprised the undifferentiated primordial chaos." Often this was left unnamed, but when this was named it was called *Asat* or *Skambha* or *Brahman*. "This last term finally prevailed, and as it prevailed it signified an idea vastly different from that of the dreaded Rigvedic Asat. Thinkers, having reflected upon hell, passed beyond it, and in passing beyond it turned their back upon heaven as well, to find their goal at last in the infinite Brahman which transcends both, whether the good or the evil."

Now, the word *Asat* occurs sixty times[1] in all in the Ṛgveda in its different forms, and it is a fact worthy of note that neither orthodox tradition nor western interpretation has ever given the word hitherto the sense of *Hell*. In forty-five out of these sixty occurrences, the word occurs as a finite verbal form of the root *as*, 'to be.' Such forms need not be considered at present. Only the nominal form *Asat* with its declensional variations has to be noted in the present context.

Sāyaṇa understands the form *Asat* (accent on the first syllable) 3 times in the sense of 'untruth' (*asatya*), and once each in the senses of 'inauspious' (*aśubha*), 'unmanifest'

[1] In RV. II. 26. 1, the word occurs as part of the compound *Abhyasat*; the forms *Asan* (accent on the first syllable) and *Asan* (without accent) occur seven times and twice respectively, but even these two words are no where understood in any of their occurrences to mean any sort of *location*, either by the traditional commentators or by modern interpreters of the Veda.

(*avyākṛta*), and 'indescribable' (*nirupākhya*) ; the form *Asat* (without accent) is understood once each to mean 'goes or reaches' (*gacchati, prāpnoti*), and 'fruitful' (*phalasādhanasamarthaḥ*) ; the form *Asataḥ* (accent on the first syllable) which occurs thrice means 'of the villain' (*duṣṭasya*), 'of the demon' (*rākṣasasya*), and 'of the not yet existing Brahman' (*asatsamānāt brahmaṇaḥ*) ; the form *Asati* (accent on the first syllable) is used to mean 'colourless Ether' (*nīrūpe antarikṣe*) and 'unmanifest' (*avyākṛte*).

The forms *Asatā* (accent on the first syllable) and *Asatyāḥ* occur once each and mean 'misery' (*duḥkhena*), and 'untruthful' (*vācikasatyarahitāḥ*) respectively. The form *Asati* (without accent) which occurs but once (RV. V. 53. 15) need not be taken into consideration, as it is used only in a verbal sense.

Sāyaṇa's meanings[1] to the word are, therefore, 'inauspicious,' 'unnameable,' 'unmanifest,' 'untruth,' 'misery,' 'fruitful,' 'to go or reach,' 'villain,' 'demon,' and 'ether.'

Roth and Böhtlingk[2] seem to accept only *three* of the meanings given to the word by Sāyaṇa *viz.*, 'unnameable or

[1] Yāska supports Sāyaṇa in so far as the first of these meanings is concerned; the forms *Asat* and *Asan* occur once each in the Nirukta (V. 19 and IV. 19 respectively), and mean respectively 'will be' (*bhavati*) and 'may be' (*syuḥ*) as interpreted by Yāska. The word does not occur in the *Nighaṇṭu*. That Sāyaṇa also follows the tradition laid down by his predecessors in the field of Vedic interpretation follows from the fact that commentators on the Veda like Skandasvāmin, Udgītha, Veṅkaṭamādhava and Mādhava who lived long before him, interpret the word *Asat* exactly as Sāyaṇa does in the several contexts in which it occurs. Excepting the case of Veṅkaṭamādhava's commentary, a complete MS. of which is available (*Adyar Library MS.*, No. XXXVIII. D. 15), the rest are available only in fragments in their printed form. Hence, of the several occurrences of the word *Asat*, Skandasvāmin's interpretation is available only for RV. I. 9. 5 ; 89. 5 ; 107. 1 ; 114. 1, Udgītha's gloss for RV. X. 5. 7 ; 10. 11 ; 27. 1 ; 29. 2., and Mādhava's commentary for RV. I. 9. 5 ; 57. 2 [See *Ṛgvedabhāṣya* of Skandasvāmin (Madras University Sanskrit Series, No. 8), Edited by C. Kunhan Raja ; Ṛgveda with the commentary of Udgītha-Acharya (Dayananda College Sanskrit Series, No. 15), Edited by Vis'vabhandu S'āstri ; *Ṛgvedavyākhya Mādhavakṛtā*, Edited by C. Kunhan Raja (Adyar Library, 1939].

[2] *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, I. 547.

indescribable,' 'unmanifest,' and 'untruth.' They give the following meanings to the word: (1) *nicht seiend* (not existing)' *nicht vorhanden* (not present), *keine realität habend* (having no reality); (2) *wie es nicht ist oder sein sollte, seiner Bestimmung nicht ensprechend, unwahr, unrecht, schlecht* (as it is not or should not be, having no clear ascertainment, untrue, unjust, bad); (3) *nichtseiendes* (non-existing), *nichtsein* (non-existence); (4) *Unwahrheit* (untruth), *Lüge* (lie). The same is the case with Grassmann[1] who, understanding the word both as an adjective and as a noun, gives the following meanings: (1) *nicht seiend*, (2) *unwahr, unheilsam*, (3) *das Nichtseiende*, (4) *Unwahrheit, Lüge.*

To Wallis,[2] the word has only *two* meanings; when coupled with *Vacas*, it obviously means 'false,' and otherwise it always means 'not yet existing,' which are the same as the 'untruthful' (*vācikasatyarahitāḥ*) and the 'unmanifest' (*avyākṛta*) of Sāyaṇa. His reasoning in support of his view runs: "The word *Asat* is used in the Ṛgveda in two senses, as an adjective with *vacas* 'speech', and as the converse of *sat*. . . In the first case the meaning is clear; it is equivalent to *asatya*, the unreal or the false, the converse of that which is really the fact. When used with *sat* it occurs invariably in passages of a cosmogonic character; *sat* is said to be born from *asat*, that is, translated into modern idiom, *asat* precedes *sat* or *asat* becomes *sat*; we are told that Indra made *asat* into *sat* in a trice; or *asat* and *sat* are mentioned as in our hymn (X. 129) as belonging to the first creation. Where the two words are coupled together by a conjunction, *asat* always precedes *sat*. The *asat* must therefore have had in itself the potentiality of existence; it is not merely the

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda*, p. 153.

[2] *Cosmology of the Rigveda*, pp. 61 ff.

'non-existent,' but may almost be translated the 'not yet existing,' as *bhavat* is elsewhere opposed to *sat*, *jāyamānam* to *jātam*, and *bhavyam* to *bhūtam*. It is not colourless as our word 'nothing,' it is the negation of *sat*. Thus the whole meaning expressed by these dark words is nothing more than the process of becoming, the beginning of development or creation."

It is indeed in RV. VII. 104 (=AV. VIII. 4) that we get an almost complete picture of what we might call the "Hell" of the Vedic people. We read here of a serpent-infested hovel, cold, dark and silent, which is situated down below, where there is neither the Sun nor any other kind of light, and which is a veritable place of complete annihilation. Indra, Soma and Agni are requested by their devotees to consign to this horrid place the entire legion of their enemies, whether they be the Rākṣasas or the Yātudhānas, the Mūradevas or the Kimīdins. There is no indication in this hymn or any where else in the Ṛgveda that this place is the natural abode of these enemies of the Vedic poets.[1] Moreover, the so-called anti-divine creatures denominated diversely by the Vedic seers by such terms as the Dasyus, Rākṣasas, S'is'nadevas, and Mūradevas are usually no more than the aboriginal inhabitants who lived side by side with the Vedic people,[2] without observing the religious rites and

[1] Norman Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 78 ff.

[2] Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 155, 157; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 150 n.; Keith, J.R.A.S. (1911), p. 1002 n.; Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, II. 382; Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, IV. 407 ff; Grassmann, *op. cit.*, p. 1053. Sāyaṇa seems to consider the *Mūradevas* to be a sort of wild tribe regaling in murder (*māraṇakrīḍāḥ*), but Roth and Böhtlingk (*op. cit.*, V. 851) seem to consider them as a 'species of goblins' (*gewisser Unholde*). But it is quite possible that these classes of people with whom the Vedic seers were continuously at war need not necessarily belong to the neighbourly aboriginal class. The entire strife may be a civil one, even within the Vedic clan, between the *Yājñikas* on the one hand, and those others who chose to follow a different religion on the other.

sacrifices performed by them; and it is only out of full devotion to his gods that the Vedic seer invoked them to punish all these neighbours who were of a separate belief and who did not observe his rituals.[1] Nor is there any warrant for the statement that the "ordinary mortals who have offended in some inadvertent manner hardly are in danger of it (hell)."[2] The following verses[3] bear ample testimony to the fact that both the ordinary sinner as well as the demon met with the same punishment:

इन्द्रासोमा दुष्कृतो वव्रे अन्तरनारम्भणे तमसि प्र विध्यतम् ।
यथा नातः पुनरेकश्चनोदयत्तद्वामस्तु सहसे मन्युमच्छवः ॥
यो मा पाकेन मनसा चरन्तमभिचष्टे अनृतेभिर्वचोभिः ।
आप इव काशिना संगृभीता असन्नस्त्वासत इन्द्र वक्ता ॥
न वा उ सोमो वृजिनं हिनोति न क्षत्रियं मिथुया धारयन्तम् ।
हन्ति रक्षो हन्त्यासद्वदन्तमुभाविन्द्रस्य प्रसितौ शयाते ॥
यदि वाहमनृतदेव आस मोघं वा देवाँ अप्यूहे अग्ने ।
किमस्मभ्यं जातवेदो हृणीषे द्रोघवाचस्ते निरृथं सचन्ताम् ॥

In the first verse Indra and Soma are requested to plunge the evil-doers (*duṣkṛtaḥ*) into the depth which is pitch dark, so that none of them can ever come out, and thus see that their wrathful might prevails and conquers them. The term *duṣkṛt* here need not necessarily denote only a *demon*, but means only any evil-doer (*Uebelthäter*)[4]. The

[1] Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 33.
[2] Norman Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[3] RV. VII. 104. 3, 8, 13 and 14.
[4] Grassmann, *Rigveda*, I. 380

remaining three are imprecations on 'speakers of untruth' (*asadvācaḥ, droghavācaḥ*),[1] and do not definitely specify any group of wrong-doers; in the first of these verses, Vasiṣṭha curses in anger that the utterer of falsehood who unjustly accuses him who follows the right path only, may, even like water compressed by the hallowed hand, perish, and the slanderer mentioned here need not necessarily be a demon. The next verse says that Soma supports neither the crooked-minded nor one who poses as Kṣatriya, but slays instead both the former fiend and the latter utterer of falsehood; both these culprits are also said to be entangled in the noose of Indra. Granting that the other verses indirectly at least refer to the villainy of demons, this verse clearly speaks of *two* kinds of offenders, the demon as well as the utterer of falsehood who must belong to the Vedic clan alone, and both of whom suffer the same penalty. In the last verse Vasiṣṭha is chafed at the displeasure of Jātavedas towards him for no offence on his part, and points out that Agni's anger towards him is unjustified for he worshipped neither false gods (*anṛtadevāḥ*), nor accused the gods as being sham, and that *destruction should fall only on those who utter lies* (*droghavācaḥ*). This last statement of Vasiṣṭha should prove that the punishment spoken of repeatedly in this hymn is meant not for any particular class of people, but for all those who go against moral law, by uttering untruth, for instance.

In Vedic India, gambling, uttering falsehood, stealing, seduction, adultery, sorcery and witch-craft[2] were considered sinful. From the repeated emphasis laid on following ancient

[1] Grassmann (*Ibid.*, p. 381) renders these words by *nicht'ges spricht*, *Lügner*, and *Lügenredner* respectively.

[2] RV. X. 34; I. 152. 1; 42. 3; X. 34 4 · II. 29. 1; VII. 104. 24, 15; cf. *supra*, pp. 184 ff.

tradition[1] (*pūrveṣāṁ panthāḥ*) it is possible to infer that neglect of this duty was also considered criminal. But Sin also meant to the Vedic seer not worshipping the customary gods (*adevayuḥ*), being averse to prayer (*brahmadviṣaḥ*), being irreligious, and offering no oblations and no prayer (*avratāḥ*, *apavratāḥ*, *akarmakṛt*) ; and the sinner was always punished irrespective of the race to which he belonged. True that the *Dasyus*, the *Rākṣasas*, the *S'is'nadevas* and the like were always sinners according to the above definition, but this fact does not preclude the possibility of the existence[2] of sceptics among the Vedic people even who were condemned by the orthodox as vehemently as were the aboriginal neighbours who fall outside their clan. It is these sceptics that should have been designated by such names as *adevayuḥ*, *brahmadviṣaḥ*, *avratāḥ*, *apavratāḥ*, *asunvataḥ*, *arātayaḥ*, *apṛṇataḥ*, *as'usaḥ*,[3] and then condemned in measureless terms. The aboriginal group should have been composed of the *Dasyus*, *Mūradevas*, *Rākṣasas*, *Asuras*, *S'is'nadevas*, *Kimīdins*[4] and the like.

In the hymn under consideration, it is only ***three*** verses that contain the word *Asat* and, rightly understood, not one

[1] RV. X. 14. 15 ; 130. 7 ; see also *supra*, p. 197.

[2] That such a set of people existed in Vedic times is well known. The *Nirukta* (I. 15 ff.) mentions the instance of Kautsa who, not content with questioning the authority of the Vedas, puts forth many an interesting argument to prove that they are meaningless and that their study is hence futile. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* which contains several passages in it (I. 2. 18, 19) where attempt is made to show the superiority of the AV. over the other three Vedas may also be regarded as an attempt in the same direction (see my paper *The Atharvaveda and the Nyāyamañjarī of Jayantabhaṭṭa* in the *Indian Culture*, IV. 369 ff. For an excellent treatment of this subject, see Introduction to the *Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta* by Lakshman Sarup, pp. 71 ff.

[3] To the same category belongs the *akarman*, *anṛc*, *anindra*, *anyavrata*, *apavrata*, *abrahman*, *ayajvan*, *ayajyu*. For a full list, see Appendix B.

[4] Sāyaṇa takes this word to mean a carper or calumniator who is ever ready to pick holes (*Kim idānīm iti carate pis'unāya*) : but Roth and Böhtlingk (*op. cit.*, II. 287) and Grassmann (*op. cit.*, p. 325) take the word to mean 'a class of evil spirits'. So does Griffith (RV. II. 98 n.)

of these can prove that *Asat* means a *location* or the *name of a location* as we are asked to understand.[1] Two of these verses[2] have already been commented upon, but the following verse[3] where *Asat* means ‘untruth’ may be considered now:

सुविज्ञानं चिकितुषे जनाय सच्चासच्च वचसी पस्पृधाते ।
तयोर्यत्सत्यं यतरदृजीयस्तदित्सोमोऽवति हन्त्यासत् ॥

This verse, according to Sāyaṇa, means that, to a thoughtful man, it is easy to understand that truth and falsity are opposites; Soma verily favours only that which is truer and more right, but smites the untrue (*Asat*). The explanations of this verse given by Grassmann,[4] Whitney,[5] and Griffith[6] are in the main identical with this interpretation of Sāyaṇa which is quite acceptable. In the face of all this, one feels that it is to give too far-fetched an interpretation to think that the above verse means as follows:

"There is a clear distinction for a man clever (in religion). True (*sat*=existent) and untrue (*asat*=non-existent) charms conflict. The true one, the straighter, just the one Soma favours. He destroys the untrue."[7]

The too well-known cosmogonic hymn in the RV. (X. 129) is most naturally understood as speaking of the birth of the world from the primordial chaos which defies all attempts at description; it would only be to read one's own prepossessed ideas into this hymn to imagine that it narrates the

[1] Norman Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[2] RV. VII. 104. 8, 13.
[3] RV. VII. 104. 12.
[4] *Rigveda*, I. 381.
[5] *Atharvaveda*, p. 488.
[6] *Rigveda*, II. 99.
[7] Norman Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

refashioning of this improvised world from what was originally the disordered den of demons.

With the rejection of the view that *Asat* means *Hell* in the Veda, the need to explain how the word changed its meaning later is also obviated. That the Upaniṣadic *Brahman* has its antecedent in the Saṁhitās[1] is an indisputable proposition. It is not by such fanciful hypotheses as the probable unification of *Sat* with *Asat* which was often unnamed and sometimes named, that this is satisfactorily proved. It is only in the philosophic portions of the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, in the pantheistic and monotheistic hymns and passages in these texts, in the conception therein of *Brahman* and *Prajāpati*, of *Puruṣa* and *Skambha*, of *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Viśvakarman*, that we have to seek for the real antecedents of the *Brahman* of the Upaniṣads.

It is thus clear that the Ṛgvedic seers understood by *Hell* nothing more than an 'underground darkness.'[2] The same view seems to have found favour with the Iranians also, for, even in the Avesta, Hell is considered to be full of darkness, as contrasted with Heaven which is said to be endowed with "lights without beginning" (*anagrā raocā*).[3]

It is in the Atharvaveda that we must seek for a more elaborate description of Hell which is already called here by its familiar name *Nārakaloka* (AV. XII. 4. 36) in contrast with *Svargaloka*, the Heavenly world, the realm of Yama. It is also described several times as 'lowest darkness' (*adhamaṁ tamaḥ*),[4] 'black darkness' (*udehi . . . kṛṣṇāc ci*

[1] See *supra*, chapters I and II.

[2] *cf*. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 168.

[3] Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 172.

[4] AV. VIII. 2. 24 etc.

tamasas pari),[1] and 'blind darkness' (*andhaṁ tamas*).[2] It is a house which is situated below and which is the abode of female goblins and sorceresses.[3] To this hell the murderer is consigned,[4] and he undergoes here many a torment. A rough idea of these torments can be had on perusal of AV. V. 19, though the hymn seems to be chiefly intended to give an account of the wickedness, and the ruinous consequences of oppressing, robbing or insulting a brahmin. Those who spit or throw filth upon a brahmin, sit (in Hell) eating hair in the midst of a stream of blood.[5] A kingdom where a brahmin's cow is cooked loses all its glory, and no vigorous hero is born in it,[6] while it is broken up if brahmins are oppressed in it.[7] An oppressor of brahmins shall have (at death) no other water except the tears of those persecuted by him, and no other dress except the cloth by which his dead victim's feet are tied.[8] Though it is not clearly stated in this hymn or in similar hymns where these punishments are to be undergone, many of the penalties like getting tears for water or sitting in the midst of a stream of blood, do suggest that the wicked had to suffer, most of these at least, in another world. The Vedic poets are not quite explicit on this point, and it is not till the period of the Brāhmaṇas that the notion of future punishment seems to be fully developed.[9]

[1] AV. V. 30. 11.
[2] AV. XVIII. 3. 3.
[3] AV. II. 14. 3; V. 19. 3; cf. the Iranian belief before Zarathustra that the evil spirit dwelt below as "the good underground," getting, in his sunless place, offerings of *haoma* libations and the blood of a wolf (Moulton, *op. cit.*, pp. 128, 173).
[4] *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XXX. 5.
[5] AV. V. 19. 3.
[6] AV. V. 19. 4.
[7] AV. V. 19. 6.
[8] AV. V. 19. 12, 13.
[9] cf. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 169; Whitney, *J.A.O.S.*, XIII. civ; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 175.

APPENDIX

A. NAMES OF SIN

Aṁhas, Aṁhati, Āgas, Enas, Ehas, Agha, Pāpa, Durita, Dureva, Anṛta, Nirṛti, Amati, Acitti, Durmati, Devakilbiṣa, Duṣkṛta, Avadya, Manyu, Dveṣa, Rapas, Nidhā, Pās'a, Prasiti, Setu, Bandha, Saṁhati, Rajju, Surā, Akṣa, Vibhīdaka, Yātu.

B. NAMES OF SINNERS

Abrahmā, Brahmadviṣ, Brahma yaḥ ninitsāt, As'as, As'asti, Anṛc, Anuktha, Ye na īrayanti, Kadācana Prajigat, Asunvat, Arāti, Arāvṇa, Dureva, Apṛṇat, Anāhuti, Araruṣ, Akarman, Akratu, Ayajvan, Ayajyu, Ayajñasācin, Avrata, Anyavrata, Apavrata, Anindra, Adeva, Adevayu, Amanyamāna, Amantu, Anṛtadeva, Mūradeva, S'is'nadeva, Aghas'aṁsa, Mṛdhravāk, Droghavāk, Duṣkṛt, Durmatin, Kimīdin, Steyakṛt, Stena, Paripanthin, Muṣīvān, Huras'cit, Dhūrti, Kitava, Abhidruh, Yātudhāna, Yātu, Rahasū, Jāriṇī, Ripu, S'atru, Amitra, Amitrayat, Abhimāti, Abhis'asti, Aririṣ, Ririkṣant, Aghāyat, Avapadaḥ kartā, Hiṁsra, Jighīṣat, Nid, Spṛdh, Sapatna, Sridh, Amānuṣa, Asura, Rakṣas, Druh, Kravyāda, Bāhukṣad, Asutṛpa, Ghoracakṣas, Kṛṣṇatvak, As'ikni, Anāsa, Dasyu, Dāsa, Paṇi, Vṛtra, Ahi, Vala, Dānu, Namuci, S'uṣṇa, Arbuda, S'ambara, Uraṇa, Svarbhānu, Pipru, Dhuni, Cumuri, Tvāṣṭra, Navavāstva, Ahīs'uva, Aurṇavābha, Dṛbhīka, Rudhikrā, Anars'aṇi, Sṛbinda, Ilībiṣa, Varcin, Vis'varūpa.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

A STUDY like this which seeks to take stock of the philosophic conceptions of the Vedic seers should only naturally conclude with an estimate of the value of these conceptions, especially in comparison with the Upaniṣads which have been accepted as the foundation of later Indian Thought.

A good many scholars have, after studying the Upaniṣads, lost themselves in their appreciation of these texts, and have spoken of them in the highest terms. Even the murky medium of the Oupnekhat, the Latin rendering of the Persian translation of the Upaniṣads, was enough to extort the following tribute from Schopenheur: "Next to the original it (Oupnekhat) is the most rewardful reading possible in this world. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."[1] No less enthusiastic is Deussen in whose view the Upaniṣads are "the culminating point of the Indian doctrine of the Universe."[2] The same sort of appreciation has been voiced forth by a host of other scholars who also attempt to compare Upaniṣadic thought with that prevailing in the earlier age of the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.[3] The result of such a comparison has very often

[1] Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 55.

[2] Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. vii.

[3] *Supra*, pp. 1 ff.

been the verdict that there is no such thing as philosophy in the pre-Upaniṣadic age, that it is permeated with prayers and sacrifices, that such an endeavour started only during the Upaniṣadic age, and that too among the rival group of the Kṣatriyas who are outside the brahmanical clan, and are not thus entitled to observe brahmanic rites and rituals. The Upaniṣads which stress the value of knowledge are considered to be in revolt against the beliefs of the earlier age where great importance was attached to rituals and sacrifices; and, since it is impossible to expect the same people to change so thoroughly, it is held that the thinkers during the two periods are different, the Kṣatriyas being the leaders of thought at the time of the Upaniṣads as were the Brahmins at an earlier age. The futility of this verdict is obvious, seeing that many of the views advanced, especially those that speak of the philosophical bankruptcy of the pre-Upaniṣadic period, proceed from a hasty glance at the views prevailing in the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas, and from an over-enthusiastic estimate of the Upaniṣads.

There is nothing in the beliefs of the pre-Upaniṣadic period which should be opposed to any sort of philosophical thinking; on the other hand, it must be clear from the foregoing pages that the Vedic seers were aware of all those philosophic ideas which go to make up the thought of the Upaniṣads. The Ṛgvedic seers had quite clearly recognized that death is not the end of man, that it destroys only his body, and that his real "Self" is something which survives bodily destruction and reaps the benefits of man's deeds on earth. The virtuous went to Heaven after death, and the wicked were thrown into the deep abyss below where there is no light, and which is infested with serpents and goblins. Heaven is three-fold, and men went

to one or the other of these according to their merit. The highest of these which belongs to Viṣṇu, is open only to the pious (*sūri, vipra*), and that lower to this, to the immortals (*amartya*) like the Ṛbhus. The lowest of these three which is the abode of Yama, is that to which the common virtuous man goes after death to enjoy the happiness he has earned by his good conduct on earth. Of the fundamentals of the theory of Transmigration these seers also must have been aware, though the fact remains that this theory is not found fully developed till the time of the Upaniṣads. Though these seers worship numerous gods, most of them personifications of nature, there is still in them the quest for the One behind the Many, for Unity amidst Diversity, so clearly obvious in the conception of Hiraṇyagarbha and Prajāpati, Viśvakarman and Bṛhaspati, and Puruṣa. The philosophic hymns which contain these ideas may be late, but they still belong to the Saṁhitā period, for there is not a single hymn in any of the Saṁhitās which can be said to belong to the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Nor do these exist in the Saṁhitās as interpolations. They have a distinct place therein, and their presence in the Saṁhitās cannot and should not make one feel that the native hue of prayer is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought. These hymns do show a marked advance of thought as compared with the rest of the hymns; for this, the reason to be adduced is evolution of thought, but not any kind of foreign intervention which has, after all, little evidence in support except the imagination often of certain not quite unprejudiced modern scholars, and which is quite unknown to indigenous tradition which regards the Upaniṣads as nothing more than the final portion of the Veda (*Vedānta*). At the end of the Saṁhitā period, several tendencies towards philosophic speculations are seen. These grew more and more in the

period of the Brāhmaṇas, and had their full development only in the Upaniṣadic age.

This tradition about the unity of thought in Vedic literature, comprising the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas (the latter including the Upaniṣads also) cannot be summarily dismissed as a mere theological fiction. The Upaniṣads themselves contain the tradition of the Upaniṣadic ideas being only a continuation and expansion of the philosophical speculations found recorded in the Saṁhitās. Many of the philosophical hymns and stanzas in the Ṛgveda are found incorporated into some of the Upaniṣads.[1] This shows that even in the Upaniṣadic period which cannot be very far removed from the Saṁhitā period, thinkers were aware of a tradition of philosophic thought; and this intimate relation between the text of the Upaniṣads and the text of the Saṁhitās is enough evidence to show that just as the Brāhmaṇas explain the liturgical portion of the Saṁhitās, so do the Upaniṣads undertake an interpretation of the philosophic portions of the Saṁhitās. Further, it is difficult to maintain that the Upaniṣads are confined absolutely to intellectual matters, since in many of the Upaniṣads we come across liturgical matter[2] and glorifications of sacrifices. Philosophy and ritualism must thus be considered to have progressed side by side along parallel lines without any mutual conflict. There is very little evidence in the Vedic Literature itself in support of the theory that ritualism preceded and was later superceded by intellectualism. There is no reason to believe that thinkers like S'aṅkara accepted unity of thought in the entire Vedic literature, or the authority of such a unified text in their

[1] *Īs'āvāsyopaniṣad*, 18; *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, II. 5. 2; *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, III. 1.

[2] See, for instance, the introductory portion of the *Bṛ. Up.* where certain rituals connected with the *As'vamedha* are elaborated.

philosophy, simply to win popularity for their doctrines, or to placate any fanatic and irreconcilable section of Hindu community. They must have inherited the ancient tradition of the mutual harmony between ritualism and philosophy, for otherwise they would have completely ignored the Vedic texts. In view of these considerations, it is impossible to hold the view that Indian tradition is a mere fiction which should not be taken too seriously.

It may be that the philosophical tendencies of the Saṁhitās are only scattered, but are neither connected nor systematized; but it would be wrong, on this score, to dispense with them as 'obscure gropings or half-formed myths.' A soberer estimate of the Upaniṣads cannot fail to show that these criticisms are as much applicable to the Upaniṣads. In a very interesting article[1] contributed to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Professor Edgerton deplores that the common tendency should be, with ancient as well as modern scholars, to systematize and correlate things in the Upaniṣads which, by their very nature, defy such an attempt. Edgerton can see no such definite doctrines in the Upaniṣads of which it could be said that it is 'der eigentliche Geist der Upaniṣaden.' These Upaniṣads have no permanent point of view in regard to such questions as how the One Principle or Thing was conceived, or what its relations are to the empiric Universe. "They are tentative and experimental, not fixed and final. They are philosophy in the making. They never seem to feel that they have found the ultimate truth." Nor is Edgerton able to agree that 'the two names Brahman and Ātman are so predominantly the favourites (in

[1] *Source of the Filosofy of the Upaniṣads*, J.A.O.S. (1916), XXXVI. 197 ff. Some more views of a similar nature are given by him in his other article, *The Upaniṣads: What do They Seek and Why?*, J.A.O.S. (1929), XLIX. 97 ff.

the Upaniṣads) that other expressions are negligible in comparison.' He cannot find that this is so, at least in the older Upaniṣads. His own view is that "the Upaniṣads as a whole proclaim no philosophical system, nor anything that even remotely resembles a single, unified philosophical system,"[1] and that "every idea contained in at least the older Upaniṣads, with almost no exceptions, is not new to the Upaniṣads, but can be found set forth, or at least *very* clearly foreshadowed, in the older Vedic texts." He seeks to demonstrate the veracity of this claim by the preparation of a card-index[2] of the philosophic ideas and expressions in the Vedic Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, an examination of which should prove 'the close dependence of the Upaniṣads on the older Vedic Philosophy.'

Nor is it possible to claim that the Upaniṣads give the final answers to the several problems raised by them. Even the doctrine of Transmigration, which is considered to have found its full form in the Upaniṣads, leaves several questions unanswered. It is stated that the departed Soul goes to another world along a certain path which indicates some sort of sojourn in the other world before the Soul comes back for its next life on earth. Side by side with this, there is the other statement that as soon as one body is left off, the Soul takes another body. There is no adequate explanation regarding the exact nature of Transmigration on this point. Also we are told that all are subject to the law of Karma, and every one must pay for his actions; but it is not stated whether there is any scope for the play of free-will which gives some sort of power to man over his actions. Nor is

[1] cf. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 57; Hume, *Thirteen Principle Upanishads*, p. 9.

[2] For the scheme of this index, see J.A.O.S. (1916), XXXVI. 203.

there any exhaustive treatment in the Upaniṣads of questions like man being the absolute maker of his future through his present actions, or whether God's grace and such other factors also come in in deciding the fate of man. Most important of all, there is nothing in the Upaniṣads which should say what the actual nature of the being is who transmigrates. These are problems, which are left unanswered; and if some answer is given, it is either too vague or uncertain or indefinite. If, therefore, the many philosophical ideas found in the Saṁhitās are not very highly developed, they certainly do not lose their philosophical character. If, like the old German Nursery Rhyme:

> " O sage mir, wie geht es *zu*,
> Gibt weisse Milch die rote Kuh "

the Vedic seers wonder that shining milk should come from black and red cows (RV. I. 62. 9), it does not mean that all higher thought is remote from them. Statements like these are often allegorical and, when understood in their true light, they do reveal the great mind behind the several utterances in the Veda. It may be that the philosophical hymns in the Veda are very few in number, and that the many philosophic ideas are only scattered; but it has already been stated that even the Upaniṣads have neither definite nor final answers for several important philosophical problems raised by them. It may be that the treatment of these questions is fuller in the Upaniṣads than in the Saṁhitās, but this certainly does not mean that the former are not clearly anticipated by the latter. One must also bear in mind in this context that, while the Upaniṣads are distinctly philosophical texts, the Saṁhitās are not so, and that we have consequently no right to expect systematic philosophy in such texts, even if systematic philosophy did exist at that time.

Speaking of the Upaniṣads, Bloomfield[1] says that they captivate, not because they are finished products, but because they show 'the human mind engaged in the most plucky and earnest search after truth.' And according to Hume,[2] the Upaniṣads "represent the earnest efforts of the profound thinkers of early India to solve the problems of the origin, the nature, and the destiny of man and of the universe, or—more technically—the meaning and value of 'knowing' and 'being.' Though they contain some fanciful ideas, näive speculations, and inadequate conclusions, yet they are replete with sublime conceptions and with intuitions of universal truth." The same can be said of the Saṁhitās with equal justice, with as much accuracy, and without any fear of exaggeration.

I do not claim that I have been able to make any revelations, or arrived at positive conclusions regarding philosophy in times prior to the Upaniṣadic period. My attempt has been only to collect facts, after investigation in the Vedic texts, to make out a case for postulating that the Vedic Saṁhitās presuppose a volume of philosophic thought that must have been current at their time, although these texts, by their very nature, cannot be expected to, and do not also, give any systematic treatment of philosophic thought. What the nature of philosophy was at the time of the Ṛgveda, we cannot say; and, for that matter, we cannot give a direct answer to a similar question regarding even the Upaniṣads. We cannot speak of the religion or the philosophy of the Mahābhārata or the Purāṇas, but we know that there were philosophic speculations going on during the age of the Epics and the Purāṇas. The same is the case with

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 58.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. vii.

the Vedic Saṁhitās. We can say what the philosophy is in the Sāṅkhya system or in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of S'aṅkara. We can also say definitely what the theology or religion of Rāmānuja is; but we cannot have the same definiteness in matters religious or philosophical in so far as the Vedic texts are concerned. It is for this reason that no attempt has been made to describe what the Vedic religion was or what the Vedic philosophy was during the period preceding the Upaniṣads. All that I have endeavoured to show in these pages is that there was vigorous activity in the fields of religion and philosophy, even in times anterior to the age of the Upaniṣads.

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